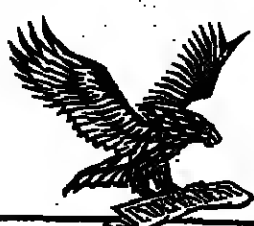


12/20/96



# THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,173

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 1996

WEATHER: Cold, wet and windy (IR45p) 40p

THE TABLOID

Best CDs of the year

THE TABLOID

Off the piste, onto the streets

COMMENT

Polly Toynbee: why the BBC should stand up for US PAGE 19

## Sorry (but I still think I'm right)



Photomontage: Jonathan Anstey

Jojo Moyes

The Duke of Edinburgh yesterday apologised for any "offence or distress" caused by his suggestion that gun club members were no more dangerous than cricketers. However, the Duke did not apologise for holding the views that he does, and several public polls appeared to show that there is considerable support for his standpoint. The controversial comments, which sparked a torrent of protest from MPs and anti-gun campaigners, were contained in a radio interview broadcast last night. In the interview, the Duke said: "There's no evidence that people who use weapons for sport are any more dangerous than people who use golf clubs or tennis rackets or cricket bats."

blame parents' call for a total handgun ban, but added: "I'm not sure that the reaction is ... the most rational." Yesterday morning Buckingham Palace took the unusual step of issuing an apology after anti-gun campaigners claimed they were "sickened" and MPs across Westminster accused the Duke of "blundering" into sensitive political debates. "His personal views were very much focused in the area of how difficult it is to apply the law sensibly in these difficult situations," said a spokesman. "Prince Philip made absolutely clear in the interview his horror at the Dunblane incident and his sympathy for the bereaved." But it was noticeable, however, that the Duke did not actually retract his views. His comments about handguns won

Out of touch, Paul Valley, Analysis, page 18

support in a number of public polls. Of almost 10,000 GMTV viewers who phoned the programme's telephone poll hotline yesterday morning, 75 per cent said the Prince was right. In a later BBC Radio 5 poll, 68 per cent of those who called in agreed with

the Duke's comments that a complete ban on handguns was an "over-reaction" to Dunblane, while 32 per cent disagreed. A total of 2,784 people supported his views, while 1,304 did not. Those figures indicated a shift in public opinion since last October when an NOP poll found 72 per cent supported a ban.

A survey of 150 backbenchers published yesterday by the Harris Research Centre found almost half of all Tory backbenchers were opposed to any change in handgun laws. That contrasted sharply with Labour MPs - 91 per cent of whom wanted a complete ban, 4 per cent of whom favoured the ban on weapons over 22 and 3 per cent of whom wanted no change in the law at all. Overall, 45 per cent of MPs of all parties wanted a total ban, 24 per cent a ban on over 22s and 26 per cent wanted to leave the law unchanged.

Eileen Harrild, the gym teacher who was the first to be shot by Thomas Hamilton, described the Duke's remarks as "very insensitive, crass and offensive."

"I am glad he has apologised but I would like him to take back what he has said and would like to think he has thought more deeply and come to a different conclusion about handguns. We are not talking about shotguns or rifles but handguns."



"I would like him to retract what he said and come out and say he would be in favour of a handgun ban." Mrs Harrild still has to undergo further surgery for the wounds she suffered on her arm. "I think some people forget there are people who were injured in the gym struggling to come to terms with their injuries. There are people who have to live with the consequences of that day." She said if Hamilton had been armed with a cricket bat instead of handguns, the adults in the gym would have had a better chance of deflecting him. Sir David Steel, the former Liberal leader, said yesterday in Beverley, east Yorkshire: "The Duke of Edinburgh's problem is that he was born with a silver foot in his mouth."

## Ministers reject advice to halt BSE from sheep

Anthony Bevins

Political Editor

A Europe-wide ban on the use of spinal cord and spleen from sheep and goats in the human food chain, proposed by scientific advisers, has been rejected by European agriculture ministers. The extended ban on the waste from sheep and goats was put to ministers by the European Commission under a special high-speed emergency procedure, on advice from World Health Organisation experts and the European Union's Scientific Veterinary Committee. A report from the all-party Commons European Legislation Committee said yesterday: "The Commission argues that because it may be possible for sheep to be infected by BSE [Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy], producing a

disease clinically indistinguishable from scrapie, action should be taken to prohibit tissues which are likely to contain the BSE agent to enter any food chain (human or animal)." The Government admitted in March that a number of Britons had died from a new form of the fatal Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) apparently due to exposure to BSE - almost certainly by eating infected food. So far 15 cases have been recorded. Although scrapie has existed in sheep for centuries, apparently without causing CJD in people, scientists have been increasingly worried that BSE is a more dangerous form of the disease, and that if it spread to sheep then they could, in turn, infect people. The brains, spinal cords and spleen are the most infective tissues. The Government intro-



Douglas Hogg: Euro plans go further than UK law

duced measures to remove cattle brains and spines from the food chain in 1989. But this was not introduced for sheep or goats. Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, told the Commons committee that the European proposal went beyond current UK legislation, and would require "the removal of spinal cord from sheep and goats over 12 months ... and of spleen from all sheep and goats. It would thus necessitate changes in the way these animals are handled at slaughter and also in trading practices." The Commons committee then added: "Although the recovery of mechanically-recovered meat from cattle has already been prohibited in the UK, the proposal, if adopted, would prevent plants currently producing mechanically-recovered meat from the vertebral columns of sheep and goats from continuing with this practice." In the event agriculture ministers decided in Brussels on Tuesday to reject the Commis-

sion proposal. It is not known how the UK cast its vote. Mr Hogg banned the use of sheep and goat heads in the production of food for human consumption on 15 September, but the vertebral columns of sheep and goats are used in the production of "mechanically-recovered meat." This is based off the bones of carcasses, and is widely used in cheap burgers, sausages, pasties, pies and soups. The defeat in Brussels might have been expected, because only the UK, France, Ireland, Portugal and the Netherlands - five out of the EU's 15 members - impose curbs on the use of "specified risk materials", like the head and spinal cord, from higher-risk cattle. Mr Hogg told the Commons in a written reply on Wednesday night that the commission plan had been rejected. "The coun-

cil considered, but failed to agree on, a proposal banning the use of specified risk materials in the manufacture of animal feed and food-stuffs," he said. He did not reveal that ministers had been considering a ban on the use of sheep and goat spinal cord and spleen for human "food-stuffs." The commission has been asked to make "further proposals in this area" after taking further advice from the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee. The Ministry of Agriculture's latest progress report on BSE said that the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee had urged ministers to consider the possibility of BSE in sheep, and "consider removing the brains from all sheep and goats over six months of age at slaughter." That proposal was enacted in September.

## Railtrack rebuked for underspending

Christian Wolmar

Westminster Correspondent

Railtrack has been sharply rebuked by the Rail Regulator, John Swift, for failing to spend £333m it has been given by the Government for investment on Britain's crumbling railways. Mr Swift said, in a letter to the anti-privatisation group, Save Our Railways, that Railtrack's "current level of underspend is wholly unacceptable to me and I expect prompt action to remedy this". He is demanding that Railtrack sets out its investment programme to "show clearly and unequivocally whether or not Railtrack is delivering [its] investment programme". Railtrack's underspend in its first two and a half years of existence amounts to 25 per cent of the amount it should have in-

vested to maintain and improve the rail network. Railtrack has consistently failed to spend the amount it is required to do so by the Regulator and earlier this month it revealed that in the first six months of this financial year it only spent £193m compared with the £259m it had promised. Yet, profits jumped from £111m in the six months to 1 October 1995 to £145m in the same period this year. Save our Railways said the company put profits before investment. "For two years, Railtrack has broken the Regulator's rules on how much money should be spent on rail maintenance. Now Railtrack will have to increase spending radically on the rail network or risk the Regulator taking action," said Jonathan Bray, co-ordinator of the campaign. According to an industry source, Railtrack's capacity to invest has been inhibited by the fact that it has had three reorganisations since its creation in April 1994 and earlier this week announced yet another one. The spectre of underinvestment by a privatised Railtrack was raised by opponents of the

sale throughout the privatisation process but ministers said that safeguards were in place. However, Mr Swift told *The Independent* last night that the role of a regulator "was not only to wield statutory powers but to carry on a regular dialogue with Railtrack". In fact, Mr Swift's powers are circumscribed. Railtrack has a seven-year contract - negotiated with Mr Swift - which determines the level of its income from train operators and that cannot be changed until 2001. Mr Swift's most serious sanction would be to refer Railtrack to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission but he is only likely to do this if it continued to fail to invest over a long period. A spokesman for Railtrack said the company had spent £100m more in the first six months of this financial year than in 1995, but he accepted that targets had not been met. "We come from a culture where it has been difficult to spend huge sums of money because of the annual Treasury restrictions. There is also the need for our suppliers to develop to match our spending requirements."

## Net wedlock ends in web of intrigue

Andrew Brown

Religious Affairs Correspondent

Margaret Anne Hunter had been married for four months to a man she had met over the Internet before she noticed he was a woman. The crucial clue that alerted the West Virginian woman that all was not as she had supposed with her husband, came when "his" mother rang and asked to speak to "Bobby Anne" and not to the Thorne Wesley Jameson Groves she thought she had married. Now she is suing her spouse for \$575,000 in West Virginia, where the couple were married last year. As well as the fraud she charges him with, she also wants compensation for all the money she spent on food, transportation and telephone calls during the relationship. According to her lawyer, Seth Guggenheim, Ms Hunter had every reason to be deceived. "Bobby had such credible and detailed explanations, excuses, and personal history. There was nothing that gave my client and other people pause," he said. Groves told Ms Hunter



that he was suffering from AIDS, and that the heavy bandages, which covered his chest at all times when he addressed, were to heal wounds he had sustained in a car crash, rather than to conceal his breasts. She believed him. The couple met electronically in the autumn of 1995. It is common for men to pretend to be women on the Internet for reasons ranging from curiosity to obscure sexual gratifica-

tion; and fairly common for women to pretend to be men, at least in some areas of the Net, in order to avoid ceaseless propositioning. However, this is the first recorded case in which such pretence has been carried through to the point of marriage. By December last year, they had spent two nights together in a hotel room. It is not clear what transpired, but afterwards Ms Groves proposed marriage, and Ms Hunter, her suit claims, agreed "out of compassion and love". They were married last winter in a hotel in front of 60 relatives of bride. No one from the purported groom's family attended the wedding; and though Ms Groves claimed to have AIDS, "he" never saw any doctors for the condition. Contacted by a news agency, Ms Groves' mother, who had unwittingly exposed her daughter's identity, refused to comment. Ms Hunter blamed the whole thing on the Internet, which she no longer uses. "Computer users need to be increasingly careful with whom they speak," she said.

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## news

# Bad blood fails to deter royal passion

Jojo Moyes

The Duke of Edinburgh has always found it easy to reconcile his love of blood sports with his position as president of the conservation charity, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature.

As, apparently, has the charity itself. "Anything that he does in his private capacity is beyond the sphere of our relationship with him," said a spokesman, Javier Arreaza, from the headquarters in Switzerland yesterday.

Anything? "His relationship

Prince reconciles longstanding enthusiasm with role for nature charity

with us has been very good for conservation. We cannot really begin to hypothesise."

Not that much hypothesis is necessary. Shooting is a long-established favourite pastime of the Royal Family and Prince Philip's total "bag" over the past 30 years stretches over continents, species and runs into mind-boggling numbers.

Figures compiled from press reports by the anti-bloodsports lobby suggest that in Britain alone he has shot stag, roe, rabbit,

hares, wild ducks, snipe, woodcock, teal, pigeons and partridges and pheasant numbering at least 50,000.

Prince Philip especially enjoys shooting wild boar on the estates of friends in Germany. On one occasion he and Prince Charles are said to have killed 50 wild boar in a single day.

He frequently invites sporting friends to the Royal Family's 20,000-acre Norfolk estate at Sandringham. In 1993, out shooting for up to four days a

week during his seven-week stay, he hit his target of 10,000 pheasants. His shooting parties are estimated to have killed about 150,000 pheasants over the last two decades.

The Prince rarely listens to criticisms of his passion for shooting. In 1961, despite protests from British and Indian politicians, Philip went ahead with an Indian tiger shoot. On that trip he also killed a crocodile and six urials - a type of mountain sheep.

Although he has bowed to pressure and given up big-game hunting, Prince Philip continues to defend his love of blood sports and has frequently claimed that he is culling and not killing the animals.

But while the Royal Family is prepared to consider change in many areas, its enthusiasm for blood sports remains as much a part of royal life as corgis, speeches and divorce.

The Queen often accompanies the Duke on pheasant

shoots. Charles and his sister, the Princess Royal, have organised competitions in which they lead rival shooting parties.

And it seems the Royal passion will not dim with a new generation. Prince William is said to prefer shooting to any other sport while Prince Andrew took Beatrice on a shoot when she was six.

In October the Duke provoked an outcry by declaring shooting "an intelligent leisure activity" for children. He was backing a new book teaching novices about gun handling.

## Howard forced to toe line on euro

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, yesterday defeated Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, in a last-ditch attempt to change the Government's "wait-and-see" policy over the single European currency before the election.

The Cabinet decided to stick to its existing policy on the single currency at a meeting chaired by John Major to review the Tories' strategy for the election, now expected to be on 20 March or 10 April.

The decision means it is highly unlikely that any change in the policy will be made before the election, in spite of plans by more than 100 Tory MPs to fight on personal manifestos, rejecting a single currency.

The setback for Mr Howard was seen by Euro-sceptic Tory MPs as a final defeat for their campaign to force the Chancellor to rule out entry into the single currency for the lifetime of the next Parliament.

Mr Clarke agreed to return in the New Year with a further report setting out the basis on which the Government will judge the convergence criteria for the single currency. That could enable Mr Howard and other Euro-sceptic ministers to rally in the New Year, but the prospects for a policy change were discounted at Westminster.

"As far as the Cabinet is concerned, it's all over now," said one leading Euro-sceptic. Mr Howard failed to gain support around the Cabinet from other Euro-sceptics. "Michael Por-

tillo does not say much these days," said one former minister.

John Redwood, the champion of the Tory right, yesterday said the single currency preparations were causing unemployment across Europe and the criteria were being fudged. He called on the Cabinet to show unity: "It is most important that the Cabinet speaks with one voice, and that there are no stories of splits or rows."

A senior Conservative source said: "They had a discussion about the election strategy and then remained in political session to discuss the Chancellor's paper and EMU. The Cabinet confirmed the present negotiate-and-decide strategy."

"It was agreed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would bring forward a paper exploring the basis on which the Government would judge those criteria at the right time."

The meeting followed reports that Mr Howard had defeated the Chancellor when he won Cabinet backing for him to present a paper to the Cabinet on the single currency criteria.

Hopes were raised among the Euro-sceptics that the his critics would ambush Mr Clarke, who had made clear he would be against entry into the single currency if the convergence conditions were "fudged".

Euro-sceptic Tory MPs said the French government's use of public sector pensions to lower its debts was evidence of the criteria being fudged. The Treasury said it would be after the election, in late 1997, before it could make any judgment.

Hamish MacRae, page 19

## Police question fiancée of road rage victim



Murder squad detectives were last night still questioning the girlfriend of the alleged 'road rage' victim Lee Harvey.

Redditch police arrested Tracie Andrews, 27, pictured, two weeks ago in connection with the death of her fiancé but had been unable to interview her in connection with the killing as she was immediately admitted to hospital.

Photograph: PA

## E. coli claims two new deaths

Steve Boggan

The Scottish *E. coli* outbreak claimed two more victims yesterday, taking the total number of dead to 15.

It brings to eight the number of pensioners who have died after being infected with the bug at a church lunch in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, a month ago. The outbreak is now the world's second worst, coming after an epidemic in Canada in 1985 which killed 19 people.

Health officials insisted the outbreak was diminishing, in spite of announcing that tests had led to the confirmation of another 15 cases of infection. The total number of suspected cases across central Scotland now stands at 404, of which 250 have been confirmed.

The figure of 404 was unchanged from the day before, according to health board officials. "The increase of 15 cases does not mean there is a fresh outbreak," one official said. "It simply means test results have come through from the Reference Laboratory in Aberdeen."

The two latest victims died on Wednesday night at Monklands District General Hospital. One was named as Sarah Cameron, 78, from Wishaw, whose family confirmed that she had been among a group of pensioners who attended a lunch at Wishaw Old Parish Church on 17 November, where allegedly contaminated pies made by John M Barr & Son were served.

The second of the two latest victims, a 78-year-old man, was not named. Shortly after the deaths were announced, Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, criticised the level of funding for research into *E. coli* in Scotland. "The total Scottish Office funding in *E. coli* 0157 over a six-year period has been £500,000," he said. "That is half of one week's share of the National Lottery jackpot."

## significant shorts

### Lobbyist's companies to be wound up

Companies run by Ian Greer, the lobbyist at the centre of the Neil Hamilton cash-for-questions affair are being wound up.

Ian Greer Associates was one of the largest lobbying groups and Mr Greer boasted of being the best-connected lobbyist in the Tory party. Its clients have included British Airways, British Gas, Carlton TV, Peter Carter Ruck and partners, Pall Mall, Thames Water and Philip Morris.

However, when the libel case brought by Mr Greer against the *Guardian* collapsed in October because Mr Greer and Mr Hamilton withdrew, many of his clients left. A creditors' meeting will be held on 7 January.

Christian Wolmar

### Satellite will watch trawlers

Trawlers are to be electronically tagged to curb illegal catches and halt the chronic depletion of fish stocks, EU ministers agreed last night.

From June 1998 spy-in-the-sky satellite monitoring will be compulsory for boats over 24 metres fishing on the high seas and industrial trawlers. The tracking devices are deeply unpopular with fishermen but Britain backed the plan in the interests of conservation. Spain, whose fleet is most often accused of illegal fishing, opposed it but was out-voted. Officials sought big quota cuts to protect stocks.

Katherine Butler

### Lottery £11m goes pop

Britain's first pop music centre has been given £11m of Arts Council lottery, the fourth largest award for a project outside London. It will be built in Sheffield and open by 1998.

A model of the futuristic building was unveiled by Russell Senior and Nick Banks of Philip in a Sheffield nightclub. At least 400,000 visitors a year are expected.

Ester Leach

### Minister joins the exodus

The trade minister Anthony Nelson joined other bright middle-rank ministers, including Stephen Norris, Richard Needham, and Tim Eggar, who have decided to stand down from Parliament at the next election.

A former merchant banker, he has been MP for the safe seat of Chichester since 1974, and his departure will start another selection stampede by those MPs who have been displaced by constituency boundary changes. Mr Nelson, 48, said that "for family and personal reasons, I have decided to turn my energies to something new". His wife, Caroline, a cordon bleu cook, is reported to have multiple sclerosis.

Anthony Bevis

### Health chiefs defy charter

A health authority is threatening to break the Patient's Charter by delaying operations for more than 18 months to make ends meet, a leaked memorandum shows.

The internal memorandum from Hammersmith Hospitals Trust says Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth health authority "do not want any of their non-clinically urgent patients to be admitted until further notice, even where this results in patients waiting in excess of 18 months".

Chris Smith, shadow health secretary, said: "Patients all over London and the Home Counties are now going to have to wait until next spring for treatment because of the madness of the internal market the Tories have imposed."

Colin Brown

### Al-Fayed will give money to pro-life party

Mohammed al-Fayed has promised to contribute money to a new anti-abortion party which plans to field 50 candidates in the general election.

The Egyptian-born owner of Harrods, who has four children, is a strong believer in family values and has given money to at least one Christian organisation.

The new Pro-Life Alliance Party, founded by Bruno Quintavalle, 25, wants to raise enough money and find enough candidates to earn a party political broadcast on television. It will put candidates up against high-profile figures who are pro-choice, such as Virginia Bottomley, Sir Nicholas Lyell or Marjorie Mowlem, if they have no pro-life opponent standing in their seats.

A spokesman for Mr Fayed said he did not know how much money he would give, but that he "would not argue" with suggestions that it was a five-figure sum.

Fran Abrams

### Major has the last laugh

John Major is one of six candidates nominated for the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme's News Personality of the Year, from which Tony Blair was excluded over claims of attempts to rig the poll. The winner will be announced on Boxing Day.

### Tax-case man is cleared

A businessman was cleared of corruptly providing a holiday for the Inland Revenue inspector Michael Alcock in return for tax favours.

A judge at the Old Bailey ordered a jury to acquit David Shamoon, 66, of West Kensington, London.

The judge also ruled that two charges of corruption against Alcock, 47, of Colchester, Essex, were to be dropped but he still faces 11 other charges.

### Care worker abused son

A former care assistant at a child's home in Northern Ireland was jailed for nine years for sexually abusing his eight-year-old son.

Originally, he had been committing 15 acts of buggery, but after the boy gave evidence and was cross-examined via a video link-up with Londonderry Crown Court, the man changed his plea to guilty. The offences occurred at the man's flat in the Creggan area of Derry.

### Ouija killer sent to Broadmoor

A Devil worshipper who stabbed a 15-year-old boy to death after a Ouija board spelled out the word "kill" was ordered to be detained indefinitely in Broadmoor.

Michael McCallum, 20, turned his bedroom in Walworth, south east London, into a shrine to the Devil where he lured Michael Earridge and his friend Stephen Curran, also 15, the Old Bailey heard.

It ended with McCallum slitting Earridge's throat and plunging a foot-long combat knife 11 times into his chest and neck, while his terrified friend looked on.

### Pension fund inquiry refused

The Government rejected a Labour demand for an independent inquiry into the "scandal" of the British Rail pension fund, from which a £500m surplus is being given to the new private companies. Viscount Goschen insisted in the Lords that there was "no scandal whatsoever" and there were "categorical protections" for pensioners.

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## IRA lorry alert raises fears of London bombing

Patricia Wynn Davies

Police were scouring London yesterday for a lorry feared to have transported bomb-making equipment to the capital after Scotland Yard disclosed that IRA terrorists have been using a vehicle yard in the city.

Commander John Grieve, head of the anti-terrorist branch, issued an appeal for information about the 7.5 tonne Ford Iveco lorry, which the IRA might have used to bring bomb components to the mainland.

The appeal follows a search on Monday this week of a north-west London lorry yard, which Commander Grieve said had been "clearly used by the Provisional IRA".

The vehicle, white with blue curtain sides, probably had a 1986 or 1987 registration plate (C, D or E), has red bars under the platform and a red bumper, and bears the remnants of faded sign writing on the cab doors.

Both Commander Grieve and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, urged people in London to be on their guard against a possible Christmas and New Year bombing campaign by the IRA.

Sir Paul said his force remained on a high state of alert for a full range of possible IRA strikes, including bombings and incendiary attacks on stores during Christmas and the January sales.



Target vehicle: An electronic image of the Iveco lorry which police believe is being used by the IRA

Commander Grieve said the Ford lorry had been in the north London area earlier this year. Scotland Yard issued a computer-generated image of the vehicle.

"We believe the lorry was used at some stage to transport bomb-making equipment, possibly innocently," Commander Grieve said. "On the other hand, it may be part of the terrorists' transport."

The search of the lorry yard had been after information from the public and with the co-operation of its owners. Commander Grieve appealed for information from anyone who thought they had seen the lorry since February but said he was particularly interested in its movements in June and July.

He said the lorry might have been hired or lent out by an unsuspecting owner. No explosives or firearms had been found at the lorry yard, and there were no arrests.

"We are appealing to members of the public to help us trace this lorry. It is communities that defeat terrorism and this is a task everyone can help us with," Commander Grieve said.

He appealed to anyone who had seen the lorry, owned it, had bought or hired it recently or seen it parked to ring the free and confidential Anti-Terrorist Branch hotline on 0800 789321.

"It is by making London as hostile and environment as possible that we have the best chance of success," Sir Paul said.

2012年12月20日



# Frankincense, myrrh and compromise; the path to a happy Christmas for schools



When the pupils are of many faiths, celebrating religious festivals means keeping a careful balance

Lucy Ward  
Education correspondent

In primary school halls up and down the country, Mary and Joseph will find shelter at the inn. In one Bradford school, as in many others in Britain's multi-ethnic cities, the stars of this year's nativity play will be Muslim.

Lilycroft First School, where all but two of the 400 pupils are Muslim, is typical in adapting the celebrations of the Christmas calendar to suit its young population. "Away in a Manger" and other carols will be sung, complete with references to the birth of Jesus, but references to the Christ child as the Son of God will be omitted to avoid conflict with Islamic beliefs.

Similar compromises have been worked out by many schools with a mix of faiths to prevent the kind of incident which marred a Birmingham secondary school's rehearsal.

Washwood Heath Secondary, which is 60 per cent Asian, yesterday launched an internal investigation after Israr Khan, a maths teacher, leapt from his seat and shouted to pupils watching the rehearsal "Who is



Nativity scene: Mary, Joseph and Jesus will be portrayed in many mixed-faith schools. Top left, Israr Khan, who disrupted a school rehearsal. Main photograph: Barry Lewis/Network

your God?", prompting some to reply "Allah" and boo the mainly white choir.

Birmingham education authority said that Mr Khan stayed at home yesterday "by mutual consent", but the carol concert on Wednesday went ahead as planned. The city council yesterday insisted that the incident should not be allowed to detract from Christmas celebrations in Birmingham's 500 schools where "pupils of all faiths are celebrating the most important date in the Christian calendar".

But the teacher's outburst rekindled the debate over schools' attempts to mark religious festivities, with traditionalists of both Islamic and Christian faiths claiming that pupils should not be forced to take part in celebrations of beliefs they did not share.

Professor Robert Jackson, director of the religious and education research unit at Warwick University, believes such incidents are likely to be rare as schools grow increasingly sensitive to the best means of bal-

ancing a respect for the faiths of pupils and parents with a desire to promote understanding of other cultures.

"Many would treat these issues very, very carefully indeed. That is not to say they would decide not to touch them at all, but it would be a process of conversation with the parent-teacher association, parent governors and others in order to win the confidence of people."

Schools decide their own policy on celebrating religious festivals, with certain guide-

lines and requirements covering religious education and collective worship. Much depends on the contribution of the local authority in offering advice, and the enthusiasm of individual heads and teachers.

Religious education specialist Professor John Hull, of Birmingham University, suggests that most schools find their own way through the faith minefield with considerable success. The mistake made by many traditionalist commentators, he believes, is to confuse

the collective worship schools must offer with the kind of sacred worship practised in a church, mosque or synagogue.

"In schools, pupils, parents and teachers are collected together acknowledging their differences. They never have a service that purports to represent the worship of all these people," he said.

The key for schools aiming to involve all children is to keep the emphasis on education, not worship. The law requires that religious teaching must not in-

doctrinate, allowing schools to explain the meaning of events from Passover and Eid to Diwali and Ramadan without crossing the line into active celebration. David Parker, head of Lilycroft First School, has consulted widely with parents over religious education and worship. "Once parents realised we were not threatening to subvert anything, they were very supportive. If they trust that you are not undermining their faith then the problems don't exist."

Leading article, page 17

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## Jealousy plunges Gulf veterans into civil war

Ian Burrell

Just when Britain's Gulf War veterans have the Ministry of Defence on the run, they are being laid low by a new enemy.

A noxious cloud of suspicion, jealousy and mistrust has descended on the soldiers, drawing them into battle, this time to fight with each other.

The in-fighting has led to a succession of top-level sackings and resignations, with members of the two Gulf veterans' associations at loggerheads, accusing each other of incompetence and poaching members.

"For us to be diverting our energies into all this internal wrangling cannot be good," said one vet. "It's just what the MoD want."

Much of the jealousy surrounds one family, which has established itself at the hub of the veterans' campaign for treatment and compensation.

Ian Hill, the chairman of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association (NGVFA), served in the war for under a week but was exposed to a mixture of drugs designed to protect him from Iraqi chemical attack. He became so ill that he had to be flown home.

He has become the most high-profile of Britain's Gulf veterans, campaigning tirelessly, but he is now seriously unwell. He has repeatedly warned that he has only months to live.

Hill uses the title "Major-Chevalier", which he acquired from the Polish order of St Stanislaus, and his wife Carole, a nurse, uses the title of Dame from the same source.

Next month, Major Hill is due to sail to America to become the first British veteran to be treated in a programme sponsored by the Royal British Legion and other military charities.

Dame Carole is a member of the NGVFA executive committee, although she did not serve in the Gulf. Neither did her daughter Debbie and Ian's brother David, who are also on the committee which meets at the Hills' family home.

In recent weeks, the NGVFA committee has fired its vice-chairman and treasurer



Divided front: Ian Hill, a Gulf War veteran and his wife Carole, at their home in Lymm. Photograph: Martin Rickett

following votes of no-confidence. Several regional helpers have also been dispensed with and a succession of regional co-ordinators have resigned in protest.

Beo Gunn, the sacked treasurer, said: "They said I was not doing my job as treasurer. The

charitable arm of the organisation. Phil Sherwood, 37, a regional co-ordinator, said he felt "disgusted" by the sackings. "They were two people that I felt I could trust," he said.

Others took a contrary view. Tony Flint, an NGVFA committee member who supported

Another source of discontent is the relationship between the NGVFA and the Newcastle-based Gulf Veterans' Association (GVA) which was set up a year earlier in 1993.

In recent weeks nearly 400 GVA members have received letters at home from Eddie Blench, a former GVA chairman who is now a member of the NGVFA, asking them to swap allegiance.

Larry Cammoch, 58, the treasurer of the GVA, said: "I am extremely disappointed by it. At the end of the day we are all after the same cause, to find out what's wrong with our lads and how to treat it." He admitted that the GVA had problems in staffing its office.

This week, Carole Hill said the GVA no longer existed and that she was seeking to have its help diverted to the NGVFA. "We have taken over the GVA completely now," she said.

Some 1,200 Gulf War veterans are pursuing legal cases against the MoD seeking compensation for the illnesses they suffered after returning from the conflict.

Soldiers were left exhausted and depressed, often with breathing difficulties. Some developed bowel and liver problems and scores have committed suicide. Some claim to have had babies born with physical abnormalities.

Lawyers acting for the sick veterans say their illnesses were caused by a combination of the chemicals they were exposed to - pesticides, tablets and inoculations against chemical warfare - and leakage from Iraqi chemical weapons dumps. Further problems were caused by the stress of fighting.

Riechie Turnbull, who resigned as a NGVFA regional co-ordinator because of the in-fighting but still works with vets in North Wales and Merseyside, said the feuding was down to Gulf War illness itself.

"People are losing their homes, they are losing their jobs and they are trying to get their war pensions," he said. "The pressure is showing in their relationships both personal and professional."

It has turned into a family circus. I was vice-chairman - supposedly number two - but I was kept in the dark

problem was that I was and they didn't like it." Andy Hagan was sacked as NGVFA vice-chairman after speaking out in support of Mr Gunn. He said: "It's incredible. It has turned into a family circus. I was vice-chairman and supposedly number two but I was kept in the dark."

Both men now expect to be sacked from the NGVFA Benevolent Association, the

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## University score card

Institution	Final Rank	Percentage of staff entered
University of Oxford	6.58	91.3
University of Cambridge	6.49	98.0
London School of Economics	6.28	97.6
Imperial College, London	5.99	90.2
University College London	5.83	91.2
UMIST	5.61	86.7
University of Bath	5.56	89.5
University of Warwick	5.51	98.4
Lancaster University	5.5	91.6
University of York	5.47	91.3
University of Essex	5.45	89.2
University of Edinburgh	5.35	94.4
University of Sussex	5.35	87.8
University of Bristol	5.34	86.0
University of St Andrews	5.23	87.5
University of Wales, Cardiff	5.22	86.3
University of Durham	5.22	88.2
University of Sheffield	5.21	85.0
Cranfield University	5.2	46.5
University of Southampton	5.2	83.1
Royal Holloway, London	5.2	83.1
School of African and Oriental Studies	5.19	88.5
King's College London	5.16	85.2
University of Manchester	5.12	91.3
University of Birmingham	5.10	86.4
University of Leeds	5.07	87.9
Goldsmiths College, London	5.04	81.1
University of East Anglia	4.97	88.2
University of Surrey	4.97	78.3
University of Nottingham	4.96	88.3
Loughborough University	4.92	81.9
Birkbeck College	4.87	92.8
University of Reading	4.85	88.1
University of Glasgow	4.79	76.4
Aston University	4.77	69.2
Heriot-Watt University	4.77	69.5
University of Liverpool	4.75	82.0
University of Salford	4.75	67.8
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	4.72	86.7
University of Stirling	4.7	76.3
University of Leicester	4.68	89.6
Queen Mary and Westfield College	4.6	82.8
University of Dundee	4.59	76.4
University of Strathclyde	4.58	73.9
Open University	4.57	49.6
University of Exeter	4.55	80.9
University of Wales, Swansea	4.54	73.8
The Queen's University of Belfast	4.51	73.7
University of Bradford	4.44	88.4
Keele University	4.34	88.6
University of Kent at Canterbury	4.33	82.4
University College of North Wales, Bangor	4.31	67.7
Brunel University	4.27	75.9
University of Aberdeen	4.21	91.5
University of Ulster	4.17	54.9
University of Hull	4.04	88.3
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	3.99	86.8
City University	3.92	63.7
Sheffield Hallam University	3.56	27.6
University of Wales, Lampeter	3.55	93.4
University of Westminster	3.31	29.3
Nottingham Trent University	3.22	30.9
University of Greenwich	3.2	26.6
University of Hertfordshire	3.16	27.7
University of Portsmouth	3.12	43.9
South Bank University	3.12	22.3
University of Plymouth	3.1	44.8
Napier University	3.08	17.0
University of Brighton	3.04	44.9
Oxford Brookes University	2.96	48.1
University of West of England, Bristol	2.93	27.8
Manchester Metropolitan University	2.87	34.4
University of Sunderland	2.86	29.2
Robert Gordon University	2.83	32.6
University of Glamorgan	2.77	17.5
Liverpool John Moores University	2.77	36.4
University of East London	2.72	36.3
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	2.69	26.0
University of North London	2.69	37.3
Middlesex University	2.68	43.1
De Montfort University	2.67	52.3
University of Central Lancashire	2.63	21.9
Glasgow Caledonian University	2.63	31.5
Leeds Metropolitan University	2.63	22.7
Thames Valley University	2.63	10.0
University of Lincolnshire and Humberside	2.6	20.7
University of Huddersfield	2.53	44.5
Kingston University	2.53	33.3
Coventry University	2.48	34.2
University College of Wales, Newport	2.35	19.4
Staffordshire University	2.21	38.4
London Guildhall University	2.2	36.0
University of Paisley	2.19	19.4
University of Derby	2.19	25.9
Anglia Polytechnic University	2.08	23.2
University of Abertay Dundee	1.99	35.5
Bournemouth University	1.97	18.8
University of Central England in Birmingham	1.97	34.4
University of Wolverhampton	1.79	27.3
University of Teesside	1.74	32.1
University of Luton	1.72	28.0

The university rankings are based on the average points scored by each researcher entered for the exercise.

The points score has been calculated from the scores awarded to universities by the Higher Education Funding Council. There are seven grades from 1 through 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5 to 5\*.

The number of researchers scoring each grade has been calculated, added and divided by the total number of researchers entered.

The table also shows the percentage of university staff put forward by each university.

The main specialised institutions and the colleges of higher education have been omitted.

## Rankings open rift in Oxbridge

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Oxford and Cambridge universities were yesterday locked in a dispute over which had come top in the most extensive university research rankings carried out in Britain.

Oxford was top of the list for the highest average score for each of its researchers in the exercise, but it entered a smaller proportion of dons.

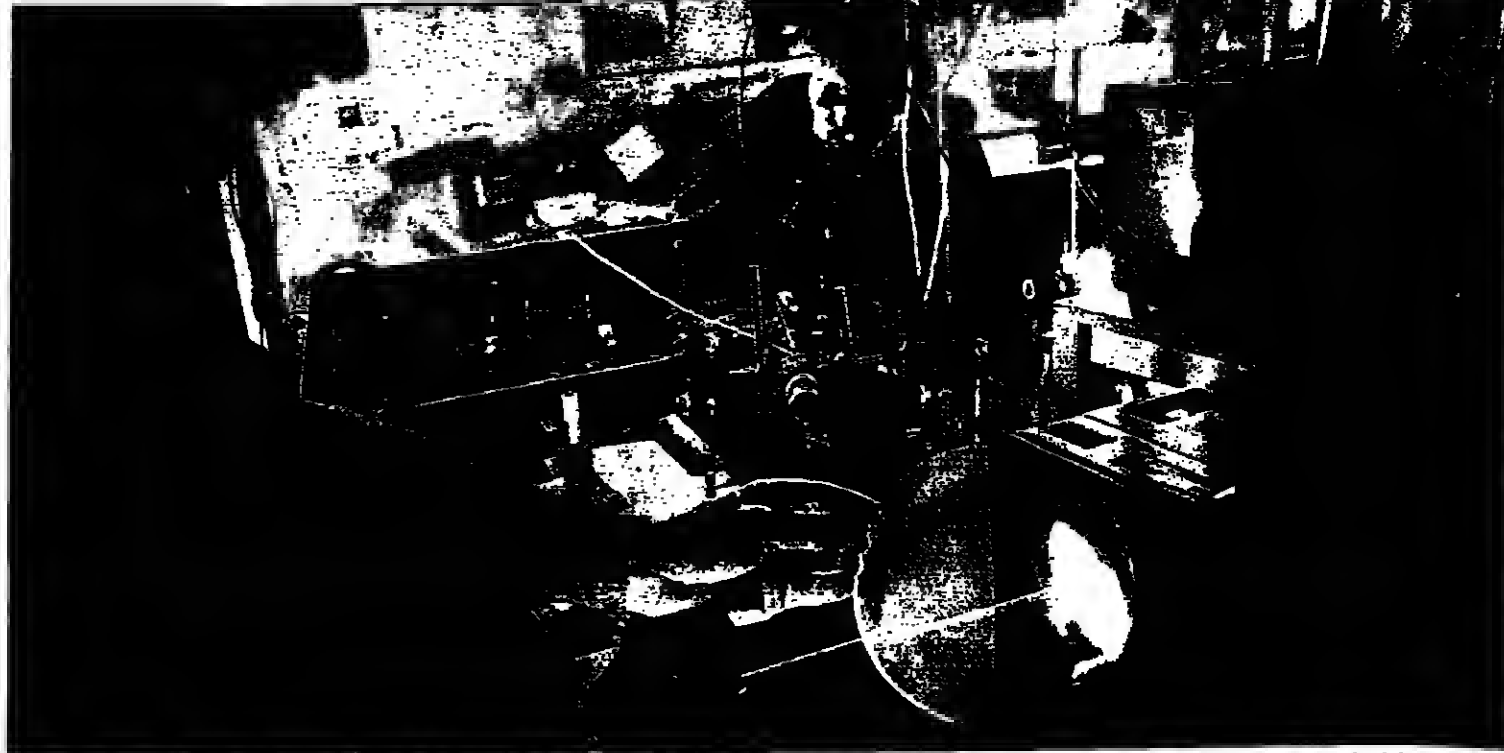
The London School of Economics produced its own league table to show that if Cambridge's decision to enter 98 per cent of dons were taken into account, it would come top. In the same table the London School of Economics was second and Oxford, which entered 91 per cent of its dons, third.

The assessment of 30,000 academics' research will be used to distribute £700m to university departments next year. Those with the lowest ratings will receive no money from the Higher Education Funding Council's research budgets.

A spokeswoman for Cambridge said they were pleased with the results: "In many ways, we have done better than Oxford. It depends how you look at the figures. We have encouraged heads of department to put in as many people as possible."

But a spokeswoman for Oxford said: "We are quite happy about the way in which we put our entry together. Our figures hold up pretty well. We are very pleased the results of the exercise confirm the range and strength of Oxford's research and the international standing of the university."

Universities were allowed to choose what proportion of academics they entered for the exercise but those not included will not be eligible for funding. Some put prestige before funding.



Tomorrow's world: Postgraduates working on an argon ion laser in the Clarendon laboratories at Oxford University. Photograph: John Lawrence

Warwick, which came fourth in the LSE table, pointed out that only two other universities beside itself—Cambridge and the LSE—submitted almost all their staff.

The old universities dominated the top places, as they did when the last exercise was carried out four years ago. Among provincial universities, Bath and Warwick did best. But the new universities, which were polytechnics until four years ago, improved their performance, with an increase in the

number of departments reaching the grades at which most work must be of national excellence from 95 to 351.

The new universities of Westminster, Portsmouth, Thames Valley, East London and Liverpool John Moores received top grades for some work. Sheffield Hallam had the highest rating of the new universities.

In traditional universities, the number of departments reaching standards of international excellence in at least some areas increased sharply.

Professor Brian Fender, the funding council's chief executive, said: "International excellence is not concentrated in tiny numbers of universities and colleges. The best universities have improved their international standing. Many other institutions have also performed impressively by identifying and building on their strengths."

The Funding Council meets next month to decide how to distribute research funds. It already concentrates most research money on a comparatively small number of universities. Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, has suggested the concentration might increase.

But Professor Fender said the aim was for the country to fund the best possible research for the money: "If it turns out that we could fund that better by a more concentrated distribution than is the case at the moment then why not? But the evidence doesn't point in that direction."

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# Tory flagship's house sales ruled unlawful

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

The London Borough of Wandsworth acted unlawfully when it sold off council houses without taking into account its duties to the homeless, according to an auditors' report published last night.

The policy of offering vacant properties for sale rather than for rent was introduced in 1983 when Sir Paul Beresford, now

an environment minister, was leader of the council. Sir Paul joined the council in 1978, the year it started selling off some of its homes, and was chair of housing policy from 1980 until 1993.

Wandsworth's arrangement was reported to have formed the basis of the one adopted by Westminster, whose former leader, Dame Shirley Porter, and eight other councillors were

re-sold £31.8m by the district auditor. However, yesterday's report, although critical, stopped short of recommending surcharges or high court action. The investigation by Rowland Little, a partner with the accountancy firm Binder Hamlyn, rejected claims that the council - which was held up as a flagship for "Tory-run" local government - had introduced its policy in order to attract Conservative voters into the area. The council "misdirected itself

in law" when it assumed that it was entitled to strike a balance between its desire to increase home ownership and its duties to the homeless, the report says. It should have considered the consequences of its policy for people with medical conditions and for others in need of social housing, the report said. The report also criticised the council's failure to consider whether the properties would be mortgageable or not. Many were in high-

rise properties and buyers found them hard to sell on.

A council paper which declared the policy a success, published just after Sir Paul became an MP in 1992, was imbalanced and "fell far short of acceptable standards", the auditor found. As a result, members who voted to open up new sales areas were acting on inadequate information.

Last night, Labour condemned Wandsworth and called

for nine Conservative prospective parliamentary candidates who have links with the council to reject its housing policies.

Tony Belton, the Labour group leader in Wandsworth who brought the policy to the auditor's attention, said it was "yet another example of 'Tory sleaze'". And he added: "People have had enough of grubby Tory politics - especially those Wandsworth residents in severe medical need of rehousing,

those trapped in flats they bought from the Tories but which are now worth peanuts, those facing ever-soaring repair bills and those homeless through no fault of their own."

Sir Paul was in Italy on ministerial business last night but he asked his special adviser to point out that the auditor's report was based on legal advice. Wandsworth had had different advice, he said. In addition, he pointed out that no individual

officer or member of the council was criticised.

The current council leader, Edward Lister, said the report set the record straight. Wandsworth had always acted reasonably and had paid proper regard to its legal powers and duties, he added. "The council's policy of encouraging home ownership has been a great success. It has helped to make Wandsworth estates attractive places to live."

## Heseltine admits to false accusation

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Michael Heseltine has admitted making unfounded allegations against a civil servant in his evidence to a cross-party Commons select committee.

The Deputy Prime Minister admitted the mistake in a letter to the Commons select committee on public affairs, and asked the MPs to "regard this part of my evidence".

The embarrassing retraction followed a sustained attack on civil service leaders by Mr Heseltine at a hearing of the committee in which he referred to the disclosure of an internal Treasury paper in the summer.

He did not identify the civil servant, but it was thought to be Helen Goodman, who applied to stand for the Labour seat of Barnsley East but withdrew. She is now on maternity leave and was cleared of any involvement in the leaking of the document.

Mr Heseltine wrote: "I mentioned in my replies to questions that I understood that a Labour candidate had leaked documents whilst a civil servant. On re-reading my papers I find that I had misread the original press report."

Mr Heseltine's letter reinforced his attack on the civil service unions. "I find it depressing that trade union officials speak-

ing on behalf of senior civil servants are in practice supporters of the Labour Party. This must inevitably raise questions as to the degree of detachment they bring to their pronouncements."

Leaders of the civil service unions, who protested to Sir Robin Butler, the head of the civil service, were outraged by the letter. "He has admitted he was wrong, but he has still not apologised," said one civil service leader.

The leaders of all the main civil service unions, representing top civil servants in Whitehall, including ministerial press officers, held a press conference to deny his allegations.

## Former helicopter chief turns his talents to design in the farmyard



The good life: Cows on the Baynards Park estate at Cranleigh in Surrey lying on the water beds designed by Alan Bristow who says that his herd produces more milk, is at less risk of knee injuries and lives more hygienically than with conventional straw. Photograph: John Lawrence

Water beds add a little luxury to the winter cowshed

Louise Jury

A helicopter pioneer turned farmer, Alan Bristow, has brought a touch of the border to the cattle shed. His 450 cows are spending the winter on water beds designed by him.

Mr Bristow, the former head of Bristow Helicopters, the world's biggest helicopter airline, devised the strengthened rubber beds after deciding that the £50,000 he was spending each year on straw could be put to better use.

He claims that his system is more hygienic because it avoids the problem of bacteria growing in the straw. They are also more comfortable for the herd which normally face the winter hazard of knee injuries on straw-covered floors. By training the cows to lie down with their heads away from the pen entrance, automatic scoops can even whisk away any slurry they produce.

When Mr Bristow unveiled his latest invention at agricultural shows this year, he was inundated with orders. He has patented the design and licensed Dunlop in Holland to make the beds, which cost around £100 each, after they have been tested at his 2,000-acre farm Cranleigh, Surrey, where he has 252 in use.

Speaking at his farm yesterday, Mr Bristow said: "Water beds have sleazy connotations of cheap bordellos and motels, but nothing could be further from the truth."

"It is designed to improve the health, welfare and comfort of our cows and improve the quality of the food... It has increased milk production by about 6 per cent."

The idea won the Duke of Edinburgh's award at the European Dairy Farming Event at Stoneleigh last September. The award was for the invention that made the biggest contribution to the dairy industry in 1996. "We won it against the big boys like ICI. You could have knocked me down with a feather," Mr Bristow said.

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**Charlie Bain  
and Ian Burrell**

The club wants to build a new 55,000-seater stadium on Town Moor, which has been in common ownership for over 700 years. The move has caused a rift between local councillors and outraged local protesters who have fought to preserve the open space from development. The proposal follows months of behind-the-scenes wrangling between the club, council chiefs

City councillors were given a sneak preview of the new plans at a confidential briefing on Wednesday night and many emerged undecided. Outside the meeting, a pressure group calling themselves No Business on the Moor handed councillors an 18,000-signature petition against the proposals.

**No business: Newcastle Uni**

Councillor John Shipley, leader of the Liberal Democrat opposition on Newcastle City Council, called for a referendum of the city's taxpayers on whether the stadium plan

to the development control committee.

"This is so important that it ought to have wider consultation and debate," he said.

Councillor Shipley said that

he would be calling on John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, to call a public inquiry into whether the stadium plan should be allowed. Councillor Geoff

O'Brien, a Labour councillor who represents the Moorside ward, said: "This is a very dramatic development and it is true that the club have taken steps to try and minimise any damage

for the Castle Leazes site amid growing fears the club was set to quit the city boundaries for a new home in nearby Gateshead.

In a further twist in the saga, it also emerged yesterday that four years ago, Newcastle United actually opposed plans by a development company to build a big sports and music arena on an adjacent site as that proposed for the new football stadium.

A letter to the City Council from the football club 'seen by



**Sir John Hall: Applying for planning permission**

### Sir John Hall: Applying for planning permission

*The Independent*, contains objections to the proposal on the grounds that it would cause serious traffic problems. Russell Cushing, the club's general manager, wrote: "The siting of another large entertainment venue in such close proximity, with apparently little or no provision for the parking of additional vehicles, would result in major safety management implications for both parties."

Ms Milton said that the traffic management implications of crowds of 70,000 were "horrific" and that if the scheme was allowed it could set a national trend.

"If they get it here what city centre park will be safe," she

Yesterday's announcement comes five months after Newcastle City Council took the unusual step of inviting the club to submit a planning application

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Feeling the heat: Alina Assymuratova, prima ballerina with the Kirov Ballet, warming up before a performance of *The Nutcracker* at the London Coliseum. Performances continue until 4 January. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

## Tories to cover millennium debt

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

In a last throw of the dice to rescue the £700m Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich in south-east London, the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, has agreed that the Government will underwrite all its costs, making it into a public, rather than private project.

This unusual reversal of the Government's credo is an attempt to keep the plans on track in the face of refusals by Labour to guarantee any potential losses. It is also a recognition that although the private sector was to have contributed £150m in sponsorship, less than one-third of that has been guaranteed so far.

Under the plan the organisers, Millennium Central, would become a quango, rather than an independent entity as it is at present. However, the agreement of the Labour Party, which

is needed because of the likelihood that it will be in power when the event takes place, has still not been obtained. Jack Cunningham, Labour's heritage spokesman, has refused to sanction the £700m budget, which includes £200m from the Millennium Commission.

Earlier this week in Parliament Mr Cunningham said that the ultimate cost might be £1bn and wondered whether the scheme should go ahead "at any price or be allowed to plummet more and more Millennium Commission funds".

There is a suspicion that Labour would like to see the whole plan ditched in favour of smaller, regional exhibitions. One source involved in the plans said: "Mr Cunningham is not being clear. He keeps on saying the budget is excessive, but he refuses to say exactly how much should be spent on the project." According to consultants to the or-

ganisers, losses could be up to £427m, if there were building site overruns and a bad summer.

The decision by Mr Heseltine to "nationalise" the exhibition carries echoes of the Festival of Britain in 1951 when a similar move was made in the late Forties by the ruling Labour Party to ensure that the event would take place even if the Tories won the 1950 election. In the event, Labour just held power and by the time the Tories won later in 1951, the festival was so popular that they did not attempt to curtail it.

According to Richard Weight, who is writing a book about the exhibitions of 1851, 1951 and 2000, concerns about overspending may be exaggerated. He says that criticism of overspending on the Festival of Britain was "so strong that they managed to keep to budget. The Arts Council was even left with a surplus since its events were so popular".

## How mystical seven gives a nod to big ears

Liz Hunt  
Health Editor

From the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Wonders of the World to *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and the Seven Dwarfs, the number seven has a significance denied to other, lesser (or greater) digits – and the human body is not exempt. Scientists have discovered that male, human ears grow in seven-year cycles, reviving the ancient Greek belief that there are circaseptennial rhythms in human development.

The discovery follows the revelation last year that male human ears continue to grow throughout life – at about 0.22mm a year in men aged over 30 – supporting the observation that some very old men have big ears in relation to their skull size.

Dr Jos Verhulst of the Louis Bolk Institute in the Netherlands and Patrick Onghena at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, analysed ear length values from the age of 30 to 83 and found that ear-growth velocity peaked around multiples of seven years.

They write in the *British Medical Journal*: "The idea of a seven-year rhythm in human development is old, dating back at least to ancient Greece. Reports on circaseptennial phenomena are, however, scarce in recent published work."

"Seven-year periodicity remains comparatively unknown, perhaps because it is not looked for by many researchers. This may be because no major seven-year rhythms seem to be present in the natural environment. In this respect, the circaseptennial rhythm differs from the better documented circadian and circaseptadian rhythms, which can be linked to day-night cycle, and to tidal periodicities, respectively."

Professor Ian Stewart, of the Mathematics Institute at Warwick University, says that in the Hippocratic tradition the number seven governs the ailments of the body. In Germany it was believed that people would not catch swine fever if they spent seven days drinking and bathing in water containing asphodel (a type of lily). A Jewish cure for fever involved taking "seven prickles from seven palm trees, seven chips from seven beams, seven nails from seven doors..." and so on, up to "seven hairs from the beard of an old dog".

Numerologists see seven as the sum of the spiritual three and the material four, signifying the creation. The world, according to the Old Testament, was created in seven days. Psalm 90 sets the human life span at seven decades; Solomon's temple had seven steps, and Noah's dove returned to the ark after seven days.

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**Lucy Ward**  
Education Correspondent

However, the forum, set up by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), was at pains to point out that the change should not devalue the experience of children growing up in non-traditional families. The new clause adds that society should recognise "that love and commitment required for

The changes have been made following a wide consultation including a survey of almost 1,500 adults in England and a random sample of 3,200 schools. Fourteen groups of headteachers, school governors and parents contributed their views, and 400 organisations responded to a postal questionnaire.

The guidance is intended as a basis for teaching moral values to pupils, to prompt debate and discussion rather than to be adopted wholesale. The revised statement will be put before the forum next month. Recommendations will be put to the SCAA and Mrs Shephard in February.

The changes have been made following a wide consultation including a survey of almost 1,500 adults in England and a random sample of 3,200 schools. Fourteen groups of headteachers, school governors and parents contributed their views, and 400 organisations responded to a postal questionnaire.

The MORI poll revealed that the vast majority of adults



A shopkeeper, Lawrence Steel, said: "Some of the houses near here have been flooded along with a couple of offices. The mechanics' exit door can't work either because the garage is completely full of water."

**Colin Brown**  
Chief Political Correspondent

The move was condemned as "heartless" by Alan Simpson, a leading member of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

The direct payments of mortgages to lenders will not be affected. The Benefits Agency said: "It has been worked out with the banks and the lenders and is more efficient for us, so that will go on."

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Ruined classic: Chandos House, off Portland Place, London. Although featured in the film *Sense and Sensibility*, it has been allowed to fall into decay. Photograph: Edward Sykes

## Asylum seekers snared in red tape

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Ministers are to review the appeals system for asylum-seekers and would-be immigrants after a huge rise in the number of outstanding cases.

Last night the Home Office rejected allegations by Labour's spokesman on immigration and refugees that the criteria for accepting asylum-seekers had been tightened up. Under a 1951 UN convention, anyone with a "well-founded fear of persecution" was granted refugee status, a spokeswoman said.

Neither she nor the court service could explain why the number of outstanding appeals had gone up twentyfold since April 1994, from 1,069 to 20,388, while the numbers applying for asylum had fallen. Rules introduced this year under a new Asylum and Immigration Act have restricted benefits for asylum-seekers and have required employers to make checks on them.

However, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, announced in a parliamentary answer that he and the Lord Chancellor would look at whether the system allowed adequate rights of appeal and whether it provided good value for money.

They would also consider what impact immigrants' and asylum-seekers' rights of appeal had on the operation of immigration control, he said.

Doug Henderson, the Labour spokesman, said asylum-seekers often did not feel the system was fair. There were 60,000 cases outstanding, and 20,000 were in the appeals system. "It is quite clear that there has been a tightening up by immigration officers on applications and has led to a greater number of appeals. The whole process is grinding slowly to a halt. It is the exact opposite of what the Government were trying to do with their new Immigration Act."

Parliamentary questions tabled by Mr Henderson revealed that the number of outstanding appeals had risen by almost 9,000 in 11 months, from 11,000. The budget of the Immigration Appellate Authority had gone up from £6.9m in 1994-95 to £9.9m in the current financial year.

Claude Moraes, director of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said Home Office scepticism about asylum cases had affected the attitudes of adjudicators. "There is a climate of disbelief and a culture of suspicion in the Home Office. We see it every day in our case work. Given that the review is by this Home Office and this Home Secretary we have got to be deeply apprehensive," he said.

A Home Office spokeswoman said the number of applications for asylum had fallen from 3,300 in January this year to 920 in June. After a High Court ruling temporarily reinstated benefits to June, 2,515 applied in July, the spokeswoman said. "The criteria have always been the same. You could ask if all those appeal applications truly valid or if some are just delaying tactics."



Doug Henderson: Questions revealed a rising backlog

## Repairs win reprieve for owners of Adam's rotting masterpiece

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

Moves to purchase compulsorily Chandos House, one of London's finest but most neglected town houses, have been suspended by English Heritage, after its owners started vital repairs.

The Grade I listed building, built by Robert Adam in 1770 off Portland Place, served for half a century as the Austro-Hungarian embassy and featured in the film *Sense and Sensibility*. But in more recent years it has stood empty and has been ravaged by dry rot.

In May this year, English Heritage took the rare step of issuing a compulsory purchase order for what had become one of the most important buildings on the quango's "Buildings at Risk" register.

A public inquiry was to be held next month. But following a start on repairs by the owners, Fairgate Investments, the inquiry has been adjourned indefinitely.

The property company, chaired by a Nigerian chairman, Chief Akande, has put a new roof on the building and has agreed to begin further work in the new year. This will include replacing four ornate Adam chimney pieces which were stolen last year.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of the heritage quango, said he was relieved that work was at last in progress, but added that the CPO would not be withdrawn until it was completed.

Last May he ruled against the "disgraceful neglect" of Chandos House. Extensive dry

rot threatened to spread into the principal rooms and there were cracks in the wall.

Fairgate bought the property for £5m in 1988 at the height of the property boom, intending to turn it into a hotel. But, as the company's solicitor observed yesterday: "My clients bought the wrong property at the wrong time."

Once repaired, the house will be put back on the market for residential or hotel use.

Built for the third Duke of Chandos, the house became the Austrian (later Austro-Hungarian) embassy from 1815 to 1871 and was the scene of

glittering parties hosted by Prince Eszterhazy, the ambassador. Its most recent occupant was the Royal Medical Association. On film, it was also the home of John and Fanny Dashwood in the film *Sense and Sensibility*.

Fairgate successfully settled a legal action against a security company over the theft of the chimney pieces. Replacing them will be a specialist task involving the import of marble from Carrara in Italy.

English Heritage served a repairs notice last February, giving the owners two months to carry out £900,000 of work.

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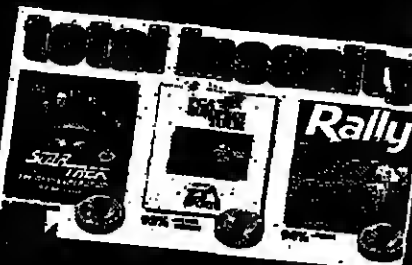
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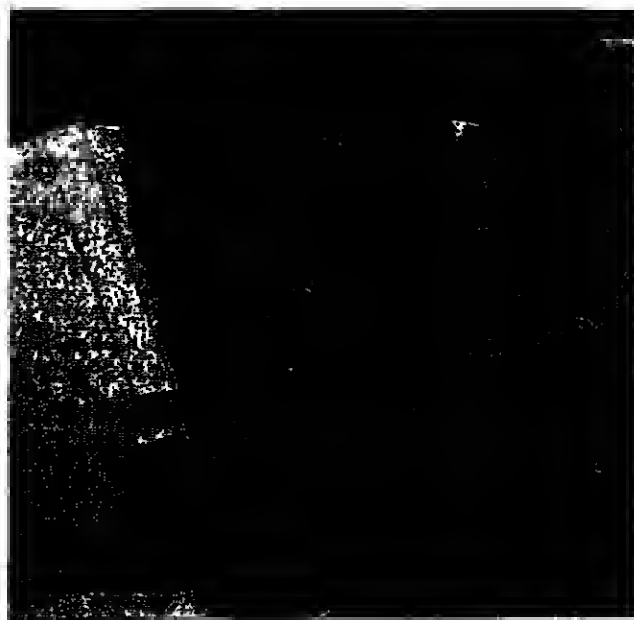
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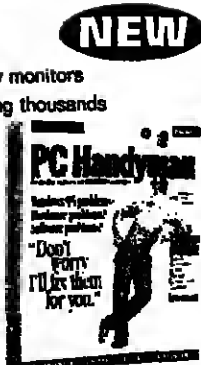
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# Peruvian leader caught in fatal waiting game

Maria Pallais  
Lima

After two days of silence, and still without having made an official appearance, President Alberto Fujimori is in close consultation with his most trusted ministers, attempting to find a solution to the devastating blow that Peruvian rebels have inflicted on the credibility of his government.

Mr Fujimori and his ministers, including Prime Minister, Hugo Pandolfi, Minister of the Interior, General Juan Briones Davila, and Minister of Education, Domingo Palermo, were reported to be meeting yesterday morning in the Presidential Palace to discuss the Japanese embassy siege that followed the seizing on Tuesday night – the birthday of Japanese Emperor Akihito – of around 500 diplomats, politicians and business leaders.

The left-wing Tupac Amaru rebels were yesterday still holding 490 hostages.

Prior to that meeting, inside the Japanese mansion rebel leader Andante Emilio Huerta, and other members of the MRTA chose Ambassadors Anthony Vincent of Canada,

Heribert Woekell of Germany, Aleibiades Karokis of Greece and the French attaché, Hyacinthe D'Montera, to relay their list of demands. First among these is the release of 500 Tupac Amaru prisoners.

On Wednesday night, the five diplomats left the Japanese embassy to meet with a government commission appointed by the President and headed by a local government official.

The rebels had asked that Hubert Lanniers, a priest, and the country's Ombudsman, Jorge Santisteban, act as their representatives. Though they both accepted, so far it is unknown whether or not they are a part of the mediation efforts.

As the rebels see it, their demands are simple – the liberation of all the 500 prisoners, among them their leader, Victor Polay. They also want better conditions in jails, justice for all, and economic opportunities for the poor.

But President Fujimori, who has built a world reputation for having had the courage to "disintegrate" terrorism in his country, especially in the capital, Lima, will find it hard to cave in to any of the demands.

"He is between a rock and a

hard place. If he gives in to just one of their demands he will lose face forever. If he doesn't, he will be blamed for bloodshed," said one observer.

The drama began minutes after Mr Fujimori's mother and his younger brother, Pedro, had left the Japanese Embassy. A group of 25 young rebels, masked and heavily armed, stormed into the residence, some carrying flowers, others dressed as butlers, and a group from the back door entered through a tunnel they had built, ordering everyone to the floor.

Local analysts were yesterday at a loss as to what the outcome would be. They insist it may be too early to predict anything. Mr Fujimori will have no choice but to reappear before Christmas, according to many.

"He's a very calculating man. He's probably waiting for what the Japanese Foreign Minister, who arrived in Lima early yesterday morning, will tell him. Then he will listen to the US representative and soon, hopefully on Christmas Eve, he will make his own decision," said a Peruvian doctor who supports Mr Fujimori. "But we have to admit it. This was a heavy blow – totally unexpected."



Standoff: Peruvian military lead away a hostage released from the Japanese embassy in Lima yesterday

Photograph: Sipa/Rex Features

## Armed force could lift Lima siege.

Christopher Bellamy  
Defence Correspondent

Counter-terrorist groups from around the world could be involved in an armed operation to release the hostages being held in the Japanese Embassy in Lima, although the large number of prisoners would make a rescue attempt more difficult. It

would only be attempted if the well-organised kidnappers from Tupac Amaru started killing their hostages.

Peru has its own, highly-efficient counter-terrorist group called Dincote – the Directorate of Intelligence for Counter-Terrorism. Led by General Antonio Ketin Vidal, it captured the leader of the

Shining Path, Abimael Guzman and also the leader of Tupac Amaru, Victor Campos, in 1992. Sources yesterday said they believed the current head of Dincote might be one of the hostages.

European and US agencies have been widely involved in South America because of the war against drug barons, and British experts helped advise Colombian police in the rescue of a British hostage earlier this year.

It is likely that experts from Britain's SAS, Scotland Yard and the German GSG-9 army unit are already in Lima. The SAS has experience rescuing hostages in circumstances very similar to those of the Lima embassy siege: the Iranian Embassy siege of 1980, which first brought the black-clad, hooded soldiers to the world's attention. During the five-day operation, both the SAS and Scotland Yard gained extensive experience in hostage negotiations.

The German GSG-9 unit's finest hour was the successful attack on a Lufthansa airliner seized at Mogadishu, Somalia

in 1977 by guerrillas from Germany and Palestine.

The previous year, Israeli commandos from Mossad had rescued a large number of fellow oattools taken hostage at Entebbe, in Uganda.

France also has an outstanding counter-terrorist unit, GIGN, a division of the French Gendarmerie. It differs from the other principal anti-terrorist forces as it is used against armed criminals in France.

Italy also has a crack anti-terrorist squad, a division of the Carabinieri. It performed very competently, rescuing Brigadier-General Dozier of the US Army who he was captured by terrorists in the early 1980s. The Carabinieri come under the Ministry of Defence – unlike the French Gendarmerie – but the Italian unit has not been prominent in international operations since then.

Experts yesterday said the large number of hostages made a rescue more difficult, but it would be no different in principle to other hostage rescue operations. The seizure of the

Japanese Embassy in Lima presents striking parallels with the capture of the Dominican Embassy in Bogota, Colombia, in 1980 by M19, a Colombian left-wing movement. In Lima, the terrorists who seized the embassy posed as waiters: in Bogota, they were playing football to a field opposite the embassy where a similar function was being held. The two in all, then donned tracksuits and sprinted across the road, seizing the embassy and 75 people, including no less than 14 ambassadors. They held their hostages for two months, demanding the release of 300 prisoners and \$50m. Businessmen from the ambassadors' countries eventually raised \$2.5m, and the kidnappers flew to sanctuary in Havana, Cuba with a few of the hostages, who were then released. The kidnappers did not succeed in securing the release of any of the people they wanted freed, but they got away with plenty of money. It was a satisfactory outcome for everyone – but was not secured by a military attack.

## Florida 'racketeers' arrested

Fort Lauderdale (AP) — Nine alleged members of the Gambino crime family, including John Gotti's apparent successor, have been indicted on racketeering charges.

Nicholas "Little Nick" Corozzo, 56, has allegedly been running the crime family now that Gotti is serving a life sentence for the 1985 execution of a rival crime boss.

The indictment against Mr

Corozzo and the others alleges crimes including loan sharking, transporting stolen goods and the attempted murder of a federal informant, Louis Malone, suspected of stealing money from the Gambino family.

The FBI arrested Mr Corozzo as he emerged from the surf off Key Biscayne. One of Mr Corozzo's top lieutenants, Leonard DiMada, was arrested in New York. Both men were acquitted

with Gotti on racketeering charges in 1987 in New York.

It was the first time an active boss of an organised crime family was arrested in Florida, the FBI said.

According to the indictment, the family ran a loanshark operation from a company called EZ Check Cashing, where loans were extended with credit rates of 2 to 5 per cent a week – equivalent to 260 per cent a year.

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# Encryption ruling hailed as free speech victory

An American judge has delighted software companies in the United States by ruling that the Constitution's guarantee of "free speech" means that the government may not stop a mathematician from posting encryption programs on the Internet.

The ruling, late on Wednesday in San Francisco, may chip away at restrictions on the export of encryption technologies, which are officially classified as "military weaponry".

Academics hailed the ruling by US District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel as a victory for free speech, while computer industry executives called it a milestone for American software producers.

Daniel Bernstein, assistant professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago, and the man at the centre of the case, said: "It's really such a shock to switch from fear of this law to suddenly maybe I can do something. As far as I can tell, I'm free."

The judge's decision stopped short of forbidding all restrictions on the export of encryption codes that allow computer messages to be scrambled so they are virtually unbreakable by any but the intended receiver.

But Judge Patel said the current rules, which treat such computer programs as if they were military weapons, were "an unconstitutional prior restraint [of speech] in violation of the First Amendment". The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and of the press.

## Decision may scrap bars to the export of codes on the Internet, writes Charles Arthur

Lawyers said the ruling will allow anyone in the US to post source code, or instructions for how to encrypt messages, on the Internet. However, new federal rules that take effect from 1 January mean the judge's decision may not have the results the industry hoped for, said the Electronic Frontier Foundation, an online civil rights group. It is not clear if the ruling covers only theoretical mathematical explanations of how such programs work or if actual software, which could be run and sold, can also be freely distributed around the world, the group said.

The White House declined to comment on the judgment, although the State Department is expected to appeal. Last year a Justice Department lawyer argued in court that a code whose sole function was to create secrecy should not be considered a protected form of speech. A message scrambled by the code, he said, "could be a love letter, or it could be a communication from [Iraqi President] Saddam to bomb Kuwait."

Professor Bernstein's victory marks a triumph for the US Constitution over its government. Restrictions on the export of encryption techniques were introduced in the Cold War.

More recently, the US and other Western governments have argued that the restrictions are needed to keep tabs on terrorist organisations. This allows the export only of "weak" encryption programs, which while effectively impossible for individuals to crack, are probably not safe from a government-owned supercomputer.

Allowing more powerful encryption programs to spread unchecked, would make it impossible to track conspiracies and criminals, they have argued.

US software companies and citizens have complained that the restrictions handicap them, and that online shopping, international banking and corporate negotiations would benefit from having high-level encryption, which could be used, and sold around the world.

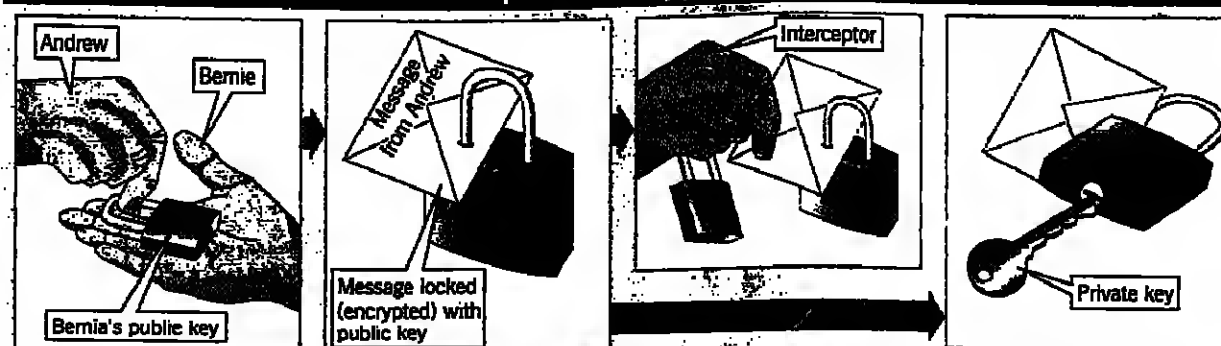
Last month, President Bill

Clinton signed an order liberalising US export policy, to allow companies to sell slightly more powerful encryption programs abroad, but only if the companies make assurances that US law enforcement could intercept the communications.

Professor Bernstein came to the State Department's notice when he wrote an encryption program called Smuffle. This allows users to scramble messages that move across computer networks. The messages can then be read only by using his decryption program, Unsmuffle. The State Department decided in 1993 that the programs required licenses to communicate them on the Internet, prompting the lawsuit.

Judge Patel noted the office that makes the licensing decisions has no standards for denying a license. The president and chief executive of RSA Data Security, the world's largest producer of encryption technology, praised the ruling. "We invented this technology but we can't pursue it because of US export controls," said Jim Bizio.

### How modern computer encryption keeps its secrets



1 Andrew, who wants to send an encrypted message to Bernie, gets Bernie's "public key" - either by asking Bernie for it, or looking it up in a directory. Bernie also has a "private key" which he never reveals to anyone else. Both the public and private keys are strings of digits and numbers. The longer they are, the more secure the encryption. Andrew and Bernie must both use the same encryption program for the system to work.

2 Andrew encodes his message using the encryption program and Bernie's public key. This "locks" the message, turning it into a completely different string of digits and numbers. The public and private keys are generated using the products of large prime numbers. Computers can encode and decode messages quickly. Andrew can now send his message.

3 Even if the message is intercepted by someone who has the public key, they are very unlikely to be able to crack it. The public key is like a padlock - you can't open another padlock with it. Decoding a message generated from the products of two large prime numbers means you have to find what the prime numbers were - and that usually requires a supercomputer, such as those owned by governments.

4 Bernie, however, has his private key - which in effect means that he has the key to the padlock of his public key. All he has to do is run the encryption software, tap in his private key, and he can read the message from Andrew - fairly confident that they are the only people who have been able to read it. Bernie can give his public key out to anyone who wants to send him messages; it costs nothing to make, unlike a real padlock.

GRAPHIC: KRISTINA PERRO



Judge Patel: 'Current Rules violate First Amendment'

## significant shorts

### Chechens in tribute to Red Cross victims rejected

Scores of Chechens dressed in black gathered outside the Red Cross compound near Grozny yesterday, a day of official mourning for the six agency workers murdered by gunmen in Chechnya.

And with the separatist republic still reeling from the brutal attack, there was a second mass slaying when six Russian residents of Grozny, were gunned down in their homes. A £60,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the killers' arrest. *Grozny - AP*

### Israel in strike at Hizbollah

Israeli jets raided Hizbollah targets in south Lebanon after guerrillas fired mortar bombs at an Israeli post during a visit by a senior officer, security sources said. Maj-Gen Amiram Levine, Israel's northern commander, was said to have been at the Braachit post on the edge of Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone when it came under attack. *Nabatieh - Reuter*

### Mafia suspect indicted

Nine alleged members of the Gambino crime family, including John Gotti's apparent successor, have been indicted on racketeering charges, police in Florida said. Nicholas Corozzo, 56, has allegedly been running the crime family now that Gotti is serving a life sentence for murder. The indictment against Corozzo and the others alleges crimes including loan sharking, transporting stolen goods and attempted murder. *Fort Lauderdale - AP*

### Tennis star's £10m claim rejected

Tennis star Monica Seles failed yesterday in a bid to win damages from the German Tennis Federation for a knife attack by a spectator which kept her out of the sport for more than two years.

A court rejected her claim that security measures at the Hamburg Open in April 1993 were inadequate, allowing her attacker to jump from the stands and plunge a knife into her back. Lawyers for Seles had claimed £10m for damages and lost earnings. *Hamburg - Reuter*

### Top Russian physicist dies

Yuli Khariton, the Cambridge-educated nuclear physicist widely regarded as the father of the Soviet atom bomb, died yesterday at the age of 92. Khariton's body will be flown from the town of Sarov in central Russia, where he died, to be buried at Moscow's elite Novodevichy cemetery. *Moscow - Reuter*

### Bardot denies racism charge

Animal-rights activist Brigitte Bardot denied in court yesterday that she incited racial hatred by claiming in a newspaper article that France was being invaded by sheep-slaughtering Muslims. The charges against the former actress - which carry a punishment of up to a year in prison and a £40,000 fine - were brought by the Movement Against Racism, the League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism and the Human Rights League. *Paris - Reuter*

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# Swiss 'should repay Nazi war gold'

Louise Jury

An official report on post-war deals on Nazi gold yesterday criticised the way the Swiss government and bankers handled the accounts of Holocaust victims.

The report's authors said the Swiss government had made repeated mistakes in handling the issue and should take "co-ordinate compensation measures".

However, they did not specify what the measures should be, or who should benefit. The two historians, Peter Hug and Marc Perrenoud, were commissioned by the Swiss government in October to investigate claims by Jewish critics and an American senator that Holocaust victims' riches were used to compensate Swiss citizens whose property was seized by countries in eastern Europe.

They rejected the charge that Swiss people were paid directly from the money of Nazi victims. But they confirmed that the Swiss government had made pay-outs to Poland and Hungary after the war.

They urged the government to use its comprehensive archives to hunt for east Europeans whose wealth was declared ownerless and handed over.

"Considering the decades of omissions, it is recommended that further steps be considered in order to fulfil today's perception of justice," the report said.

It added that Switzerland assigned funds from dormant accounts to Poland and Hungary under post-war compensation accords for confiscated Swiss property. The money helped both countries meet compensation payments, but this was not tantamount to paying off Swiss citizens, it said.

Switzerland paid Poland 16,000 Swiss francs in 1960 from accounts the Poles

claimed under international law as reverting to them since the missing owners had last lived in Poland.

In 1975, it paid Poland a larger sum of 464,000 francs and Hungary 325,000 francs based on the same home-country claim, but this time the money came from a 1960s fund for bank accounts left unclaimed after their owners became victims of Nazi persecution.

Switzerland has faced a growing wave of international criticism following the release of documents in the US and Britain apparently suggesting it profited from Nazi-looted wealth.

The British MP, Greville Janner, vice-president of the World Jewish Congress and chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, has already called on Switzerland to make a significant gift to Jewish charities in recompense. A trust spokeswoman said yesterday it was clear from the Swiss report that names of account holders had been known.

"A priority must be to reveal the names and they must do it for all the accounts. They must start looking for their heirs or survivors and if they cannot be found then the money in the accounts should be given to the World Jewish Restitution Organisation," she said.

The report was published yesterday as Switzerland finally named the nine-member team of experts who will begin an investigation next month into the country's activities during the Nazi regime.

The commission will be headed by Jean Francois Bergier, a history professor from Zurich. It includes three other Swiss historians and a Swiss lawyer and human rights investigator, Joseph Vovame. There are also four foreign historians, including the Israeli Saul Friedlander.

## Conscripts who don't measure up must fight the flab in Belarus



Wait in line: A doctor checks a conscript's centre of balance at a recruiting centre in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, 42 per cent of whose military conscripts have been declared unfit for service because of poor health. Photograph: Vasily Fedosenko/Reuters

## Taiwan sues over Clinton slush-fund claim

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

"We must have a hit a raw nerve," says Ying Chan, a New York-based journalist who is facing an unusual criminal libel suit filed by a leading member of Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang party, backed by President Lee Teng-hui.

The raw nerve was a story in the Chinese-language news weekly *Yazhou Zhoukan* alleging Liu Tai-ying, a leading Kuomintang official, offered an illegal \$15m (£10m) contribution to President Bill Clinton's re-election fund. Mrs

Chan believes Taiwanese contributions to the Democratic Party dwarf the controversial funds supplied by the Indonesian Lippo group.

Also named in the suit is her Taiwanese colleague, Hsieh Chung-liang, and Chen Chao-ping, a political consultant who has now stated he was the main source for the story. Mr Chen was one of four people present at the meeting with former White House aide Mark Middleton during which the money was allegedly offered. Mr Chen was not named in the story but has decided to go public.

There has been no legal action from the Democratic Party, which faces a growing number of accusations of illicit funding from Asian sources. US parties are not permitted to obtain funding from abroad. "This story is like a centipede," says Mrs Chan. "There are so many legs, every week brings new information".

She would like to get back to reporting it, but has been waylaid by the criminal libel suit, which carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail as well as fines. The action is also extremely costly. Mr Liu, who launched the suit, is Chief Fi-

nance Officer of the Kuomintang, one of the world's richest political parties. Although the party has financial muscle, it is not a regular litigant. The Kuomintang is not named in this suit but is behaving as a participant by having its spokesman comment on aspects of the case and by calling a meeting of its central committee to endorse the action.

Far more unusual is the endorsement given by President Lee, who usually remains aloof from matters of this kind.

"This is clear legal and political harassment," says Mrs Chan who is in Hong Kong to

attend a libel seminar and co-suit legal advisers. She is preparing for another hearing on 28 January and hopes this will provide an opportunity for Mr Liu to withdraw the action.

The pro-Kuomintang media suggest Taiwan is entitled to all means at its disposal to gain influence overseas in the face of diplomatic isolation and China's efforts to keep the island out of the international arena. So-called "money diplomacy" has long been a mainstay of Taiwan's foreign policy. But the government denies that it resorts to illegal means to win friends with the chequebook.

## Parents deride sex and violence codes

Rupert Cornwell  
Washington

After years of pressure from the government, America's television industry yesterday announced the first-ever classification system for its programmes. But even before it was unveiled, critics insisted the new scheme was too far to be effective.

The voluntary code, which will take effect in the next two months, is closely modelled on the existing classification system for films. Six categories will apply to all entertainment programmes, ranging from "TV-G", or suitable for all ages, to "TV-14", for people aged 14 and over. All children's programmes will be labelled either "TV-Y", suitable for all children, or "TV-Y-7", recommended for children aged seven or more.

The logo will appear in television listings and guides, and be shown for 15 seconds in the top left-hand corner of the screen at the start of each programme. It will be repeated during programmes lasting an hour or longer, only news and sport will be exempt.

The guidelines however were instantly denounced by children's advocacy groups, who argue they are far too vague on a programme's contents. Unlike film classifications, set by an independent body, the TV categories will be decided by the TV companies themselves - a process critics liken to putting a fox in charge of the chicken-coop.

Parents' organisations are demanding specific gradings for sex, violence and bad language. "What parent in their right mind would accept a package at the front door labelled 'suitable for a 10-year-old' and hand it to a child without further inspection?" said Gary Bauer, head of the conservative Family Research Council.

But Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America, said the industry would only accept its own voluntary system, and would fight any alternative in the courts.

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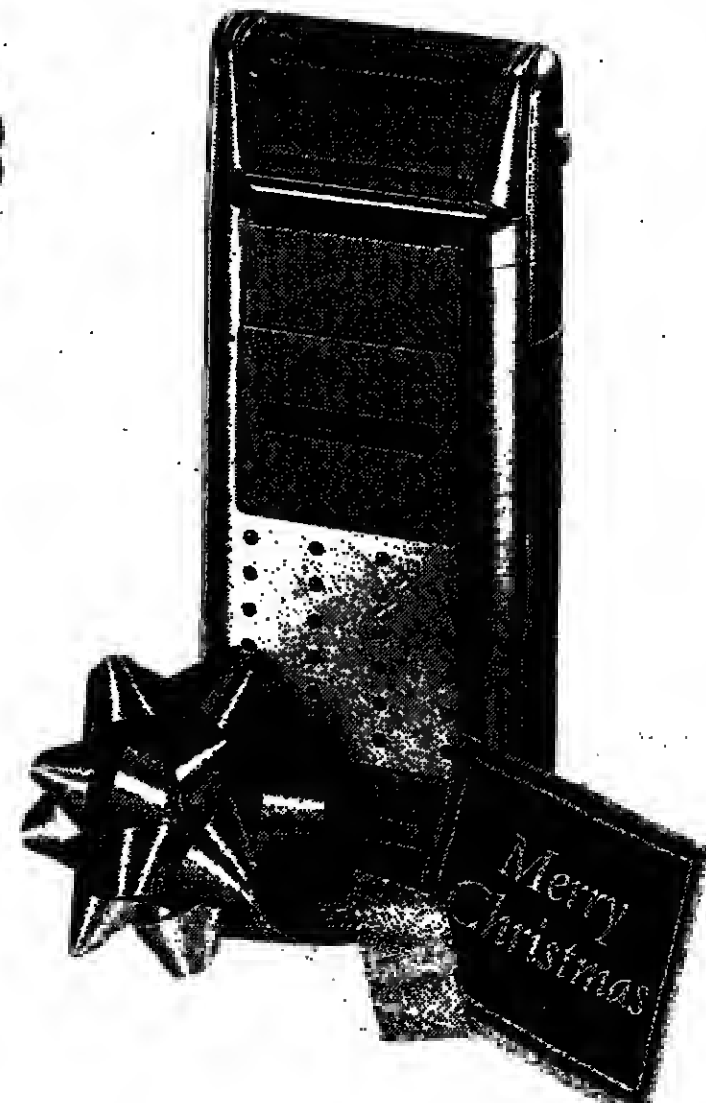
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But just try returning them to the shop after 90 days' use and see what reaction you get.

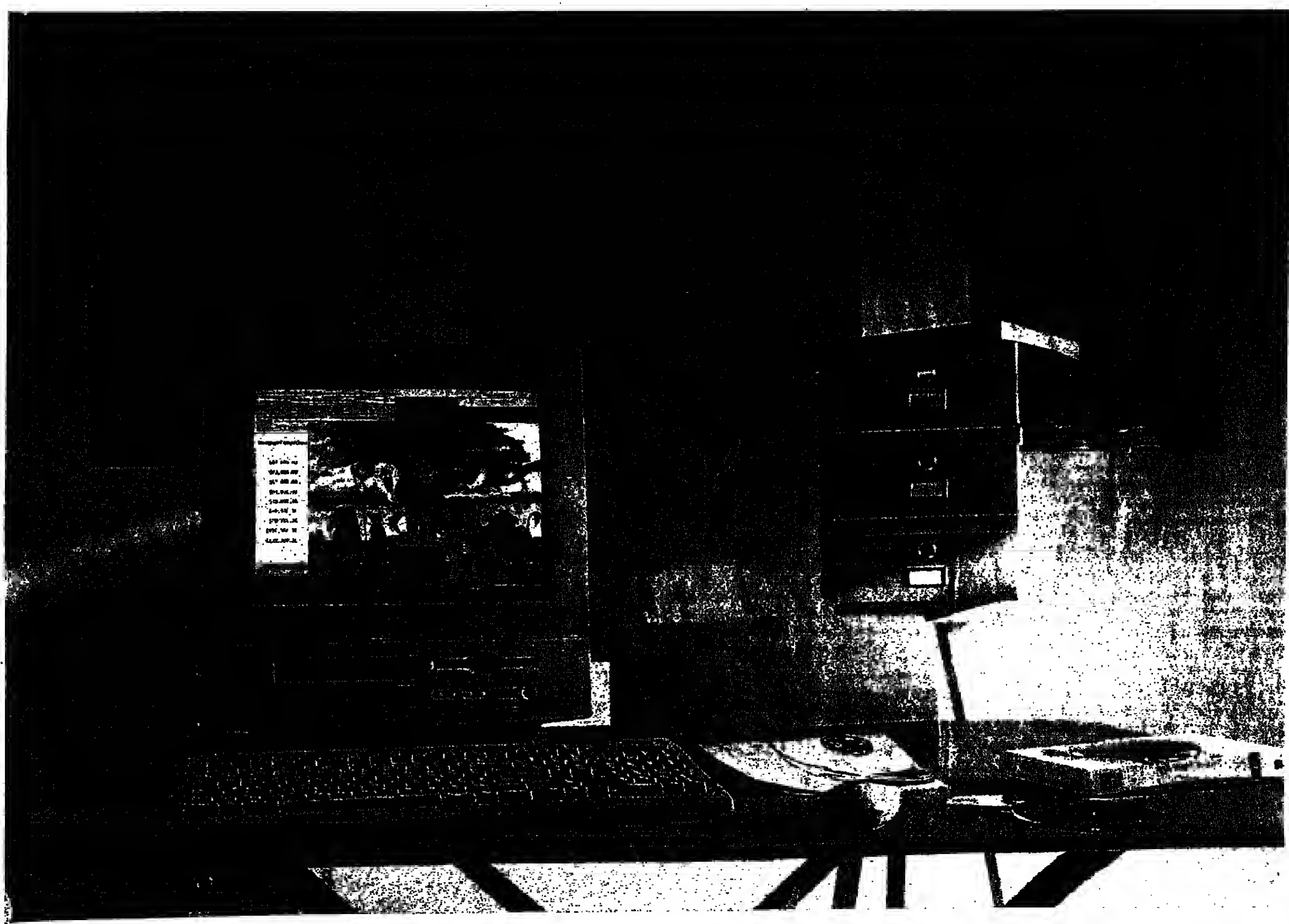


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## Virgin's image reflects religious fervour in Clearwater

Clearwater, Florida (AP) — Carrying rosary beads and cameras, thousands of worshippers are flocking to the wall of a black glass building where they believe they see the image of the Virgin Mary.

"It's quite amazing. It's very spiritual, very peaceful," said Patty Scharn, a receptionist at Seminole Finance, the two-storey building in central Clearwater where the rainbow-coloured image was first noticed on Tuesday. Some said they drove 200 miles from south Florida for a glimpse.

"People are making shrines, bringing gifts, candles, flowers, statues. Some have been overwhelmed and fainted," said police spokesman Wayne Shelton. "We have the infirm, the disabled in wheelchairs, the blind. They're coming 500 at a time."

The image, about 50 feet wide and 35 feet tall, bears a striking resemblance to a mantle-covered figure, head slightly bowed. It stretches across nine panes on the outside of the building. Shades of purple, blue, yellow and green wash across the mirrored surface like a stained glass window, swirling into a robe-draped figure with downcast head.

No one had an explanation, but glass experts planned an inspection to determine if chemicals or mineral deposits from sprinklers caused it.

Joe Mannion, a spokesman for the local Roman Catholic Diocese of St Petersburg, urged caution. "Everyone should exercise a great deal of healthy scepticism."

But believers needed no explanation. To them it's a Christmas miracle.

"It was like you're in an angel's arms and the light of Christ was above and around me," Barbara Boyer said of her experience.

Businesses nearby say the image has been developing since the Thanksgiving holiday in late November. But it was not until Tuesday that a customer asked if it had been painted on the glass.

"Nobody painted anything," Ms Scharn said.



## Bleak mid-winter for Bethlehem, with no tree in the square

Eric Silver  
Bethlehem

It looks as if the little West Bank town of Bethlehem will have to do without a tree this Christmas.

The good Christians of Finland sent a 12-metre fir to stand in Manger Square across from the Church of the Nativity, Jesus's traditional birthplace. When it arrived at Ashdod port this week, the Israeli authorities refused to let it into the country.

Bethlehem has been under Palestinian self-rule for the past 12 months. Since the Palestinians have no port, imports from Europe have to pass through Israel. The Finnish tree was sent back on the next boat.

The mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, yesterday condemned the ban as "narrow-minded and provocative". Israel sent an Israeli replacement. Mr Freij promptly sent it back. "It was dead," he said indignantly. "I told them to throw it away."

The Israelis say they stopped the Finnish fir on purely public health grounds. Eldad Landes, director of plant protection

services in the Ministry of Agriculture, said it was forbidden by law to let foreign conifers into Israel.

"The risk," he explained, "is that the trees might carry insects or fungus that do not exist in this country. They could endanger all our forests and our agriculture. The Finns have been aware of this ban for five years now. They wouldn't let us send Israeli trees to Finland for the same reason."

Mr Landes added that Israel was ready to give Mr Freij another tree if the first offering was not to his satisfaction. "Of course," he said, "he won't accept it. It's all politics."

The 78-year-old mayor has political problems this Christmas on the home front too. Palestinian activists have strung pendants across Manger Square with the portrait of Abu Jihad, co-ordinator of Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who was assassinated by Israeli commandos in Tunis in 1988.

Abu Jihad is a Palestinian folk hero, but he has nothing to do with the infant Jesus. "These

pictures are against the Christmas spirit," Mr Freij, member of the Greek Orthodox church, protested. "We are going to take them down."

Similar portraits of Yasser Arafat, however, will stay up. The Palestinian President, a devout Muslim, is coming to Bethlehem with his Arab Christian wife, Suha, for midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

Bethlehem's second Palestinian Christmas promise to be a bleak affair. According to Mr Freij, who has been mayor for 25 years, the hard-up Palestinian Authority has given them nothing for the celebrations. Neighbours organised Christendom.

But the mayor is nothing if not an optimist. He is looking forward to 2000, a Christian year. Next spring he plans to launch a \$200m appeal in Europe and the Americas to raise the run-down, neglected old city worthy of the millennium.

Till then, the good Christians of Finland are sending a Father Christmas to distribute presents in Manger Square on Tuesday night. God rest you merry, gentlemen.

## Santa strapped for cash

Abigail Schmelz  
Reuter

Stockholm — Santa's little helpers have downed tools at North Pole post offices in Greenland and Iceland, leaving piles of children's Christmas letters unanswered and thousands of dreams unfulfilled.

Carefully penned letters full of Christmas requests which are sent to Santa every year by children from all over the world have fallen victim to government spending cuts.

"Kids can send a letter to Santa but they won't get an answer," Siri Kveller, of the San-

ta Claus of Greenland Foundation said. "The more letters we answered, the more we got and we simply can't afford it."

Two years ago, official funding for the project was withdrawn and the service stopped. Now the letters are put into storage — mostly unopened.

Children who address their letters to "Santa Claus, North Pole, Iceland" probably won't have much luck either. The state-sponsored Icelandic tourism board, which once answered the letters, was forced by budget cuts to stop the project about 15 years ago.

An organisation called North Pole in Iceland, has taken over some of the job and is campaigning to make the country Santa's "rightful home". Sweden, Finland, and Canada also claim residency rights.

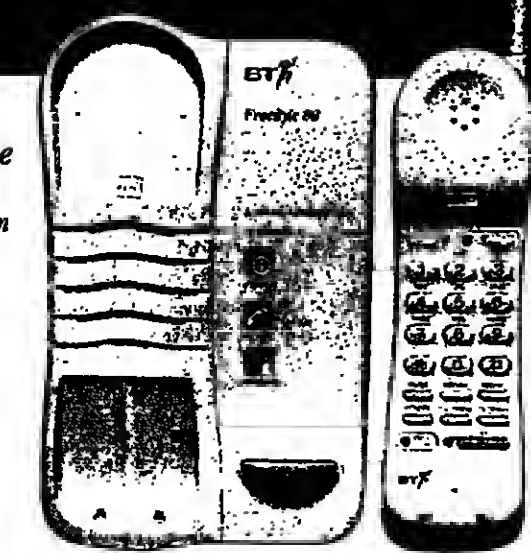
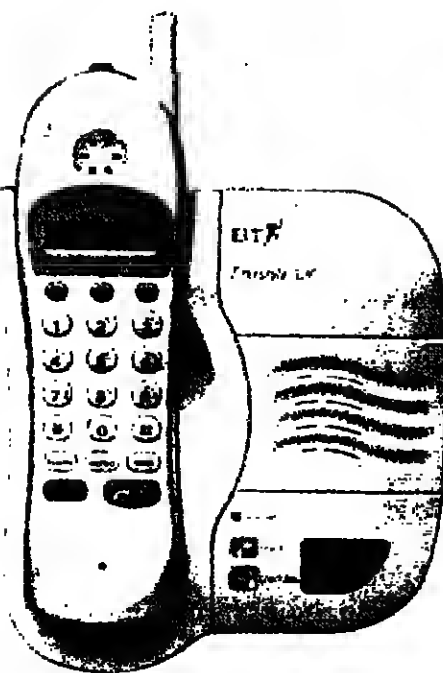
Children who write to the Finland address have a better chance of getting a reply, but even then it is luck of the draw. The post office's Santa project received 600,000 letters in year and staff say it is impossible to answer them all.

The spirit of Christmas lives on in Sweden, however. The post office receives up to 80,000 letters a year and each one is answered with a small gift.

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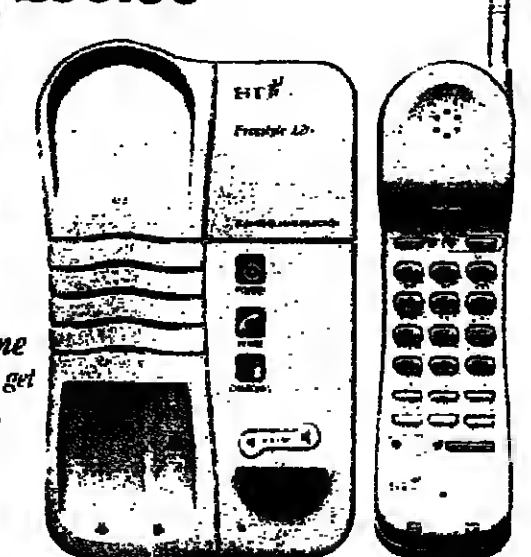
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For many years, in now forgotten comedies and melodramas, he played good-looking working-class heroes, skirting taxi drivers and small-time swindlers. But, by 1958, when he had completed both Visconti's exquisitely stylised adaptation of Dostoevsky's *White Nights* (*Le Notti Bianche*, in which he co-starred with Maria Schell and Jean Marais) and Mario Monicelli's delightfully dippy farce, precisely what one



played a cynically disabused novelist in *La Notte*, 1961); Louis Malle (as Brigitte Bardot's theatre director in *Vie Privée, A Very Private Affair*, 1961, a supposedly scathing but ultimately unpersuasive dissection of the whole Bardot phenomenon); Valerio Zurlini (the very moving *Cronaca familiare* of 1962); Elio Petri (*La Decima Vittima*,

There is, of course, a name missing from the list, which is that of Federico Fellini, with whom Mastroianni enjoyed so close a personal and professional relationship that, in their later lives, the two men, by a bizarre but not unique phenomenon of physical convergence, actually came to bear an

unusually resemblance to each other (as also happened with Franco, and Trautman, and his flingmate *alter ego*, Jean-Pierre Léaud) He was unforgettable as the disillusioned gossip columnist in *La Dolce Vita* (1960); became less Fellini's *alter ego* than what might be called his *alter ego* as the movie-director protagonist of *8½* (1963); played the sumptuously named Saporaz whisked through a gaudy treadmill of militant feminism in *La Città delle Donne* (City of Women, 1979); was profoundly touching (especially for those of us who had known him) as a young, dying, dishevelled party-hall trancer in *Ginger and Fred* (1986, opposite the director's wife and *alter ego*, Giulietta Masina); and made a brief valedictory cameo in the Maestro's penultimate film, the semi-documentary *Intervista* (Interview, 1987, scandalously unreleased in this country, although now available on video).

**Marcello Vincenzo Domenico Mustroiani**, actor; born Fontana Liri, Italy 28 September 1924; married 1950 Flora Carabella (one daughter; and one daughter by Catherine Deneuve); died Paris 19 December 1996.

# ing upheld

justifiable but how it should be construed leaving regard to its effect. The ambiguous words should be construed restrictively. To fall within the provision, therefore, a body must be more than 75 per cent political and assisting "political" assistance was provided by the case of *McGovern v A-G* [1982] Ch 321 at 240, where Slade J was concerned with whether Amnesty was entitled to charitable status. He decided it was not, because all the main objects of the trust were in part political in that their purpose was: to further the interests of a particular political party; to procure changes in the laws of this or a foreign country; or to procure reversal of government policy or particular decisions of government authorities in this or a foreign country.

No better guidance was available as to what was meant by "political" and his Lordship accepted the authority's argument that this was the correct approach.

**Paul Magrath, Barrister**

\* This is the last law report for the *Michaelmas Term*. Law reports resume on the beginning of the *Hilary Term*, on 13 January.

The meaning of "wholly or mainly" was not free from ambiguity. It had to be construed as part of a provision restricting Amnesty's freedom of communication. The issue was not

**Paul Magrath, Barrister**

- *This is the last law report for the Michaelmas Term. Law reports resume at the beginning of the next term.*

came at the beginning of the  
Hilary Term on 13 January 1907



1977 CONTINUED

*E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.*



# Out of touch – by definition

Dukes don't mix with ordinary people, they just shake hands with them, so we can hardly be surprised when Prince Philip fails to understand their worries about a gun culture, says Paul Valley

**Y**ou have the advantage of me. By now you will have heard – or had the opportunity to hear – the Duke of Edinburgh holding forth last night on Radio Five Live on the question of Dunblane and cricket bats.

Let me insist at once, I would not have wanted to listen to what he said before writing this, even if the BBC had kindly sent me an advance tape. (Presumably they sent one to somebody to judge by the row in yesterday's newspapers). I have decided rather to enter into the spirit of the man himself, who makes a habit of wading in joyously unprepared and ill-informed, his prejudices streaming behind him like unfurled banners in a glorious old film of royalty as it should be.

Let me declare my own prejudice. I rather like the curmudgeonly old cove with his impatience, his lack of tact and his unerring ability to deliver an epithet of unfailing political incorrectness in any given situation. He also keeps us journalists in work, prompting *The Sun* to one of its more inspired offerings: his characterisation of the Chinese as "slitty-eyed" on a visit to Peking was headlined "The Great Wally of China".

Having said that, perhaps the time has come when the 75-year-old Duke ought to be advised to alter the description in his passport under Occupation from "Prince of the Royal Household" to "retired". Let me explain why.

I met the Duke of Edinburgh once. I met him, though I'm not sure that he met me. I was the lowest reporter in *The Times* newsroom when the Queen and the Duke came to visit. Worthies were lined up to meet the visitors. I was told to get on with my work. As a consequence, when Philip arrived I was the only person in the entire newsroom actually typing anything. The Duke, naturally enough, ignored the official line-up and came over to see me.

"You have to be able to type pretty fast, I suppose," he pronounced. It was not the most profound of conversational gambits. Had I been the oldest occupant of the newsroom doubtless he would have said: "You must have seen some changes in your time." As consort to the monarch he is doomed to a lifetime of these brief inanities.

Who can wonder that from time to time something indiscreet pops out? And whenever something does he can rely on us loyal subjects of the fourth estate to re-chronicle his greatest hits from 50 years of public life.

He began in 1947 when, newly engaged to the heir presumptive, he asked a railway signalman about his promotion prospects: on being told it was a case of dead men's shoes Philip replied: "Just like me!" Next there was the time he asked the loyal subjects of the Cayman Islands, "Aren't you all descended from pirates?" and said in

Canada, "We don't come here for our health. We can think of other ways of enjoying ourselves."

Then there was his observation at the height of the recession in 1981: "Everybody was saying we must have more leisure. Now they are complaining they are unemployed." In 1993, visiting Lockerbie, where 11 people on the ground had been killed by wreckage from the PanAm jumbo-jet bomb, he tactlessly observed: "People usually say that after a fire it is water damage that is the worst. We are still trying to dry out Windsor Castle." And in 1995 he asked a Scottish driving instructor: "How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to pass the test?"

In part it is tactlessness. In part it is that he does not give a bugger (sorry, ducal language is infectious). But in the main it is that he is, almost by definition, out of touch with the mood of the British public. The Duke does not mix with ordinary society; he just shakes hands with it.

Take what he said about Dunblane last night (OK, so I have read a transcript). "Look," he said, "if a cricketer, for instance, suddenly decided to go into a school and batter a lot of people to death with a cricket bat, which he could do very easily, I mean, are you going to ban cricket bats?"

To which Beverley Birnie, whose six-year-old son Matthew survived the shootings at Dunblane, replied: "How many people can you kill in three-and-a-half minutes with a cricket bat? It is not the same as an automatic gun. You have to be realistic. I suspect he [the Duke] is coming from a world where guns are part of his life. But I am from a world where I have never seen a gun, never held one. I never had a reason to think about them."

Guns are as everyday a part of Prince Philip's life as cricket bats, probably more so. It is his failure to make the leap in imagination from his own position to the one occupied by the vast bulk of his wife's subjects which is significant.

It is a failure of his age – the House of Lords was last week full of other elderly aristocrats opposing gun law reform with anecdotes about their boyhood relationships with their gamekeepers. It is a failure of his class – none of those surrounding the royals seemed able to explain to them the distaste of the general public at the "blooding" of Prince William when he killed his first stag recently. It is a failure of the institution of monarchy itself, with its desperate attempt to combine tradition with modernity – so that its modern image seeks to encompass pomp, concern about the environment and cavorting on distant ski slopes even in the days when the rest of us were immured in the feel-bad factor of recession.

Who but a royal could be surprised that gaps open up between public and courtly perceptions, with the public complaining when no royal attended the 1989 Lockerbie memorial service or visited the devastated centre of Manchester after the 1995 IRA bomb. Or that the Duke's son Charles is bewildered when he confesses on television to adultery and finds that the public give him no Brownie points for honesty. Or that this week people find faintly risible the fact that his other son Andrew has been despatched to Manila for talks with President Fidel Ramos on military and economic ties between the Philippines and Britain. Randy Andy?

Of course paradox has always been part of the charm of the energetic man who unhappily finds himself permanently defined by a wife and son more important than himself. Philip was the foreign prince whom the old-Etonian courtiers of King George VI described as "rough, ill-tempered, uneducated and probably would be unfaithful" to the then Princess Elizabeth (interesting that for all the dirt-digging of the tabloids, and the predations of the US biographer Kitty Kelly, no evidence of his much-murmured infidelity has ever been produced).

He is the president of the World Wide Fund for Nature who shoots things and supports the legalisation of the ivory trade. He is the tireless worker for a vast array of charities – from playing fields for children to care for ex-servicemen – and yet he is popularly assumed to be careless of the sensitivities of individual human beings.

In the end it was the cricket bat which did for him. The full text of his radio remarks are a sensible enough contribution to the debate on gun control which the House of Lords has chosen to extend after the Bill's swift passage through the Commons. He made the point that the members of shooting clubs are as individuals no more dangerous than members of a golf club. He argued that there are always going to be unstable people who are going to do monstrous things but that "taking it out on the rest of the population" is not necessarily the most rational of reactions. He insisted that his kind of shooting – game shooting – was a social activity which helped to maintain a balance in the environment. And he warned that laws made in electioneering haste may be repented in more dispassionate leisure.

However, it was the grotesque piece of imagery he conjured – of a child being beaten to death with a cricket bat – which was so singularly inapt and inept.

"To think of the Queen coming up here and laying a wreath at our school and then hearing her husband say something like this sickens me," responded Ann Pearson, one of the anti-gun Snowdrop Campaign organisers.

The politicians, of course, have had a field-day. Tony Blair was characteristically Janus-faced: "He is entitled to his views and obviously we in the Labour Party have a different position on that," he told BBC's *Breakfast News*.

The shadow Scottish Secretary George Robertson put his finger on the real problem. Robertson, whose children attended the same Dunblane school, said on the BBC's *Today* programme: "The views of one elderly aristocrat, based on a completely crazy view of a comparison between a cricket bat and a rapid-fire handgun, is not going to deflect Parliament from doing what it believes to be right in the interests of public safety."

But he did not restrict himself to dismissing Prince Philip as "an eccentric individual" whose comments had damaged his credibility enormously. He added: "I think these remarks are going to be counter-productive, because they will remind people that this argument is still going on and the House of Lords may well be planning to inflict defeat on the Government."

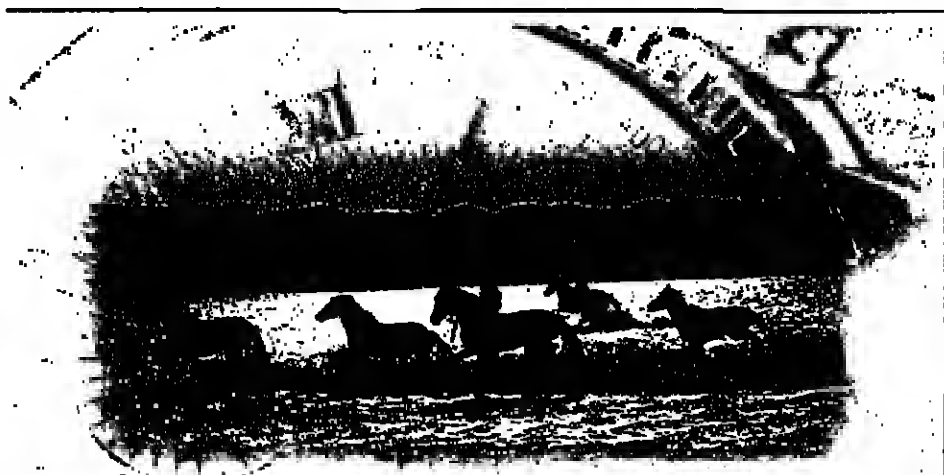
It was not just the Duke of Edinburgh's inability to resist the colourful phrase and dramatic comparison which is most revealing. It is his inability – like that of his peers in the Lords –

to grasp that for the British public the argument is over. Most people understand the arguments about the need to balance the rights of minorities with the common good. They accept that most gun owners are responsible individuals.

But most of the public, having no personal vested interests in the gun world, have performed a risk/benefit analysis and its conclusion is clear. And it is not just a response to Dunblane. Handguns, public opinion is clear, contribute towards a wider culture of violence in contemporary Britain. And events over the past year – from Dunblane, to the campaign by Frances Lawrence, the widow of the murdered headmaster, to the whole host of incidents which daily soil the pages of our fear-hungry newspapers – have persuaded people that it is time to act.

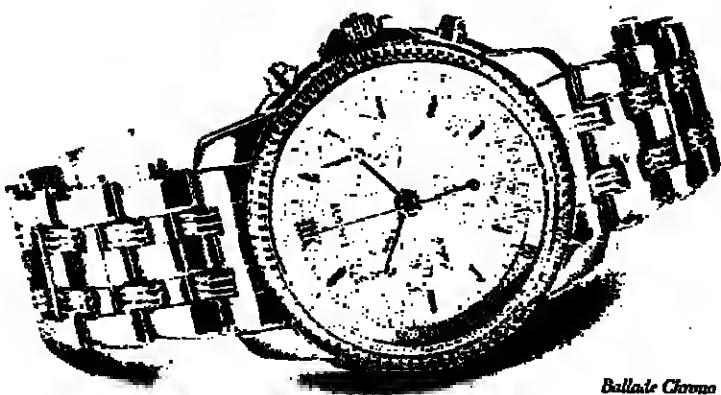
Perhaps only a gunman could not see that. And Prince Philip if he is anything is a gun man. Only two months ago he was provoking an outcry by declaring shooting "an intelligent leisure activity" for children. Over the past 30 years the Duke of Edinburgh has shot, it is estimated, a tiger, two crocodiles, 60 wild boar, countless stags, rabbits and ducks and at least 30,000 pheasants. Perhaps if he had restricted himself to clubbing them to death with a cricket bat the world would be a safer place.

The Prince has failed to make the leap of imagination from his own position to the one occupied by his wife's subjects



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## To boldly go in search of lost meaning

I have a large staff here at *The Independent* whose task it is to constantly monitor the English language for changes of meaning and to covertly insert split infinitives into my articles to gratuitously give offence to over-sensitive language mavens.

Incidentally, I first came across this word maven in a column in the *Herald Tribune* by the American writer Russell Baker, and finally discovered, after buying and selling a lot of dictionaries, that it was a Yiddish word meaning expert or connoisseur. I have since then seen it quite often in columns by Russell Baker, but have never heard the word used in my life. Whenever I have tried to use it, people either ignore me or say, "Mabel! What Mabel! I don't know anyone called Mabel!" So much for the supposed joys and advantages of a rich vocabulary. All my life I had been encouraged to believe that increased word power was a benefit. The opposite is true. All that is achieved by a rich vocabulary is to gradually isolate you from your fellow humans.

(Another split infinitive there! You're working well today, lads!)

In fact, the large and industrious staff I have here at *The Independent* to help monitor changes in language inform me that our vocabulary is, if anything, becoming poorer, with many words being marginalised and ghettoised, and suffering income deprivation.

They point, for instance, to the word "personality". You may find this hard to believe, but the word "personality" for a long time meant nothing more or less than "personality" – in other words, it referred to people's character, and by extension to people who had a lot of character. "He's got real personality!" we would say. Or, "He's a real personality!" meaning that he was flamboyant or magnetic or charismatic in some way. Now, however, it has been devalued by the BBC and others in their strange use of the word in their Personality of the Year competitions, notably the BBC Sports Personality of the Year competition, which is traditionally won by the sports person who has the



**Miles Kington**

least visible personality, and whose collected interviews would make a cure for insomnia.

Curious, I asked my large and industrious staff if they had any other examples of words being shunted down a linguistic siding like this, and after they had raised their eyebrows at my old-fashioned use of railway imagery ("Are there any sidings left in Britain? Does anything get shunted into them?" says the pencilled note from my large and industrious staff. "We strongly advise you to use car-linked imagery from now on."), after that rap on the knuckles, they gave me a

short list of doubtful word usage which I found so thought-provoking that I thought I would park it on the forecourt and see if the public wanted to test-drive it. Here we go then.

Quote There was a time when "quote" was a slangy word for "quotation". The *Oxford Book of Quotations*, we would say. Either way it referred to a phrase or saying or line of verse that had become so well-known it had entered the language. Nowadays, "quote" simply means anything that any celebrity has said recently, interesting or not. "I have a quote from you a couple of days ago," says Ned Sherrin to a guest on *Loose Ends*, and it doesn't mean that he has encountered a thought-provoking phrase that has gone into the language during Friday, it simply means that Sherrin's large and industrious staff of researchers have found a line in an interview with the guest that may well bear reheating and re-serving, even though the guest invariably doesn't remember saying his or her "quote". Period Period furniture or period houses could,

formerly, come from any period as long as it was recognisably of that period. Now, the word applies only to TV drama and always refers to Georgian times. The word "costume" is going the same way.

Lottery Used to mean a risky gamble in a bad sense, like driving on black ice. Now it means a national entertainment that gives the Government an excuse for not supporting the arts.

Gurn Used to mean an Eastern wise man. Now it refers to someone who goes on TV and talks about modern fashions, usually with the addition of "Style".

Celebrity Used to mean someone who was very famous. Now means a) someone who used to be famous, OR b) someone who has been on *Call My Bluff* at lunch-time, OR c) someone who has played a part in a TV soap opera OR d) someone who doesn't actually win awards himself but gets to open the envelope containing awards for other people.

More dodgy words soon, including input, synergy, dysfunctional, lad, etc!

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## Sweden's welfare meltdown has lessons for Labour

STOCKHOLM — On the surface all is glitter. The city is dressed for Christmas with fairy lights, the streets are full of evening shoppers, and the restaurants are packed with office parties singing (actually rather doleful) communal ditties. But the Swedes are worried.

They are worried about unemployment, for despite three years of decent growth, headline unemployment is still nearly 8 per cent, and if you add in state-paid, make-work schemes to keep people off the register, it would really be about 15 per cent. They are worried about social exclusion: the way the gap has widened between professional dual-income families and blue-collar no-income families. They are worried about stagnation in the standard of living even of people in jobs, for despite economic growth, consumption is only inching upwards, less than 1 per cent last year, about 1.5 per cent this.

"People of my age," explained a 35-year-old professional, "cannot earn enough to think of buying a second home. So we all have to spend our holidays in our parents' ones." In the land that 25 years ago was indubitably the richest in the world, this is a hardship indeed.

To cap all this, the Swedes are worried that the government, despite the advice of an official commission that looked at the proposition, might join the single currency. This gives a certain solidarity with Britain, for Swedes vie with Brits as the most sceptic of the European family of nations. According to the polls there is a solid majority against joining the single currency, and perhaps more surprisingly since Sweden has only been a member of the EU for less than two years, an apparent majority who wished she hadn't joined in the first place.

But there is a crucial difference. In Sweden, opposition to Brussels comes mainly from the left, not the right. The fear is not the British worry that the EU will impose onerous regulations that will undermine the competitiveness of industry, but rather that EMU membership will require deregulation, particularly of the labour market.

Beyond this there is a wider fear that the closer integration into the EU will undermine the still-elaborate social security system, of which most Swedes remain understandably proud. There is a deep fear that this system, the most extreme version of it in Western Europe, will have to be cut back in a much more radical way than it has to date. True, there have been cutbacks in the funding of the welfare state, cuts in hospitals and day-care nurseries. True, opponents claim the pruning has protected the administrators while hitting the front-line staff, a familiar concern. But it is still remarkably universal.

The problem is affording the welfare state in an ageing society. There are interesting implications here for a future UK Labour government. The practical question is this: can a



Hamish McRae

**An ageing population, joblessness and low growth are forcing a left-wing government to make painful cuts**

centre-left government, as in Sweden at the moment, re-fashion a welfare system more effectively than a government of the right, because it has more sympathy towards its aims and is therefore more trusted?

The answer seems to be "maybe not". There is in Sweden a powerful arithmetical problem that confronts any government seeking to push through reforms. Some 8.8 million people live in the country. At any one point, 6.7 million of those are not recipients from the social welfare system. The other 2.1 million pay in. Self-evidently, they have to pay in proportionately more per head, and these payers, at a different stage of their life, may well become recipients. But in practical voting terms the arithmetic is always in favour of higher spending. Only when the government cannot borrow more, because the interest rates become prohibitive as happened in the early 1990s, is reform forced on it. As a result the cuts imposed by the previous centre-right coalition have largely been maintained by the present government.

Opposition to these cuts has been mounting in recent weeks. The government faces something of a populist rebellion. Helena Rajaniemi, a woman with no previous political profile — "an unmarried mother of four" said a friend who is one of the 2.1 million net payers — led a demonstration of 4,000 in the Stockholm streets which received enormous publicity. There is a conflict within the labour movement, which in general supports the government. It is hard for the outsider to judge, but if anything the opposition to reform seems to be gaining ground.

The harsh reality is that the government has no option but to continue cutting its deficit: the discipline of the financial markets applies here as elsewhere. As the country continues to age — fewer people of working age, more pensioners — the underlying tax/spend balance will continue to move against the people. Explaining this, even to an electorate as well-educated as Sweden's, is desperately difficult. I suspect a UK Labour government would find itself in exactly the same bind.

This leads to an uncomfortable conclusion. Even with enormous public spending — above 50 per cent of GDP — you cannot stop rising inequality. A lot of people in Sweden, and not just on the left, are deeply concerned about this, for Sweden's easy egalitarianism is something special and attractive. If you cannot spend money to fix problems, what do you do? Boost skills? Change behaviour? And if that is not enough, what then? How Sweden will continue to come to terms with this conundrum matters to us all.

One idea being mooted here is that they may start to rebuild the family — to take back from the state some of the functions of the family which it has assumed over the two previous generations. This is not a moral agenda, but simply a financial necessity.

## What's wrong with the BBC today ...

by Polly Toynbee



**Staff clamp their hands over their mouths and claim intellectual castration. And it shows in the output**

The *Today* programme is the flagship of the BBC, the bearer of its standards and so the slot that politicians fight to dominate. It speaks with the voice of the BBC, often setting the national news agenda and yesterday it featured the Director General himself.

For that reason, if we wish to analyse the state of the BBC's soul, this is the place to shine the torch into its eye. What better time to probe the BBC than in the week it has secured almost all it expected in its new licence fee deal? As it happens, yesterday's *Today* programme presented an uncomfortable snapshot of some of the ideological problems that now face the BBC.

As a former employee, I have many close friends in News and Current Affairs and I know how wearisome outside carping can be. I supported John Birt's reforms: he saved the BBC from bankruptcy, which would have delivered it into the hands of its many political foes. It is difficult to criticise the BBC even mildly without risking joining the ranks of those enemies.

So what was wrong with yesterday's *Today* programme? First there was the calamitous Personality of the Year vote, which should have been abandoned long ago. The Blair-vote-rigging debacle exposed what everyone always knew: this farago only tests which interest groups have the fastest fingers on their telephone buttons. The list of candidates is long on victims, short on sense. John Major? Anne Atkins (the air-headed right-wing evangelical actress currently the *Telegraph's* agony aunt)? Apart from the Bismarck opposition leader, the rest are all crime victims or their representatives, a sympathy vote.

You could say this was just unhelpful foolishness. But solemnly allowing this charade to proceed speaks to a deeper malaise.

The BBC, as national broadcaster has to be neutral, it thinks. To be sure it must treat each political party fairly, but that does not mean it has to be neutral on everything else that moves and breathes. It should not be neutral between absurd arguments and serious ones. It is not "fairness" to give nonsense equal airtime in the name of balance. The dreadful "Thought for the Day" slot was at its worst yesterday, with Cristina Odone, Catholicism's answer to Anne Atkins, pontificating on the sins of a film she hadn't seen — the remake of *Lolita*.

In its lead story, the *Today* programme failed to play a single clip of the ducal gaffes and the court correspondent was as pompous as a palace apologist: if the Duke is out of touch, the BBC is sometimes not far behind. While the rest of the world spluttered with indignation or laughter (a good 40 per cent of Britons are now of republican bent), the sonorous BBC said gravely: "Damage has been done ... Being the man he is, he just gave a straight answer ... He feels, by the way, the press are only interested when he causes controversy, and all his good work is usually forgotten." Where was the spontaneous ribaldry to be found everywhere else?

The lack of either spontaneity or comment stands out in the BBC's reporting, as journalism elsewhere these days offers lively interpretation. Bland statement of fact accompanied by two brief opposing soundbites of contradictory positions is not enough. In the great cacophony of voices and opinions all around us, the BBC house style is so safe as to be virtually silent — a non-player. It is a deadening, colourless habit of mind that will not sustain its reporting for much longer. Asked for a view, BBC staff clamp their hands over their mouths and claim intellectual castration. And it shows in the output. Intelligent reporters are reduced to empty ciphers, wasting their talents, patronising the audience and exuding caution.

It would take bold leadership to dare to discard a straight-jacket that has become as outdated as the radio announcers' dinner jackets. The BBC needs the self-confidence to breathe the fresh air of controversy

with a voice of its own. It is time to tell the politicians and the interest groups to go hang. Be brave. Otherwise the licence fee becomes an albatross, obliging the BBC to offend no one and say nothing.

In recent years the BBC has been preoccupied with its own survival. Cannons on the left blasted Birt as a destroyer of old BBC traditions (often thinly disguised self-indulgences). More dangerous cannons on the right tried to dismantle the BBC altogether, sell off its assets and keep only a tiny specialist subscription service. Over past years (but quieter of late) the Murdoch press has bayed loudest for BBC blood, pursuing Murdoch's television interests. The Director General on yesterday's *Today* programme was in Cheshire Cat mode. He was pleased with the licence fee outcome, not all he wanted, but enough. He was also reasonably pleased with this week's revised DTI regulations governing Rupert Murdoch's digital set-top box. Not all he wanted, but considerably better than was proposed two months ago before all the public fuss. Try as he might James Naughtie could not get John Birt to say the words "Rupert Murdoch", let alone express alarm at the tycoon's burgeoning media power.

But now the licence fee is won, the BBC is secure, whoever wins the election. Now is the time for the BBC to forget the politicians and take up its mantle as defender of our cultural life. That means confronting the power of Murdoch, as the greatest cultural threat. For even if (which remains deeply in doubt) Ofcom successfully regulates fair access to the digital future, Murdoch's overwhelming dominance in sport and movies, what he calls his "battering-ram", will increasingly batter the BBC in the coming years.

Only the BBC, free of commercial interest, can take on this role convincingly. The political parties are paralysed by Murdoch's command of 40 per cent of the press. Who else is to take up cudgels against Murdoch's predatory newspaper-price war, financed by a cross-media ownership that would have been banned in the United States? If the BBC marches into controversy on issues like these, so much the better. For what is the point of the BBC's new hard-earned political independence if it does not have the confidence to use it bravely for the good of the nation?

## To catch a thief

Andrew Brown reflects on the strange case of the stolen headphones, and its hi-tech dénouement

Nine months ago, a court case was conceived: one of the cleaners stole a pair of headphones off my desk at *The Independent*. He was captured in the act by a video camera. What followed was an extraordinary demonstration of the ways in which hi-tech offices are constantly subverted by human ingenuity. Even the headphones were part of this subversion, since I use them to restore the privacy that an open-plan office otherwise strips away.

The case finally came to court last week. By the time it reached the court, I had forgotten even in which month the incident had taken place. I had only reported it because I wanted to be able to claim for the fairly expensive headphones on insurance: the last thing I expected was to be told that a culprit had been caught. But the video never sleeps.

The cameras that lurk in toughened black-glass bubbles, like the compound eyes of insects, cost, I am told, £5,500 each and are capable of alarming feats of technological sophistication, such as tracking automatically the movements of tagged equipment through the office. When I complained to the office security people, they sped through a fortnight's worth of tape, watching for a flicker of movement at my desk.

Within a couple of days they told me that they had seen the moment of the theft and that the police had arrested the culprit. Then I heard nothing, for months and months, until a young policeman took a statement from me. The cleaner, despite the video evidence, and the further evidence of the

electronic identity cards with which the doors in this office complex must be opened, which had placed him on the floor at the right moment.

The next shock was to learn that he had elected to go for jury trial. The headphones he stole were worth about £50. Had he admitted their theft, he would probably have been cautioned and released with no further action taken.

He had no previous form and was 25, approaching the age at which young men grow out of

**He had put his finger in the machine, and it had torn his whole arm off**

crime. By denying his act, in the teeth of video evidence, he was setting himself up for a conviction and criminal record. A 25-year-old black man with a conviction for theft is not going to find honest work again easily.

He had put his finger in the machine, and it had torn his whole arm off, I said to one of the policemen as we waited in the cafeteria of Southwark Crown Court. It is a huge, purpose-built brick fortress on the Thames, which seemed grotesquely disproportionate to the crime. But by then the theft of my £50 headphones had drawn in two police officers, two lawyers, and the head of security from the Mirror Group, which houses our offices. All of us were banging around,

waiting for a courtroom. We had been summoned to attend on a particular day, but no one could be certain when a courtroom would become available. There were 16 courtrooms to choose from, all fitted with video equipment, but all were occupied.

We waited and gossiped all morning with the legal costs ticking up like a taxi meter on Concorde. The lawyers went off to examine the video evidence, again. The cameras use a special high-definition format, with which the police had been able to see every detail of the crime. But then it turned out that this had not survived translation to the more common VHS format. A fresh tape had to be watched.

We broke off for lunch, taxi meters still ticking, but when I returned the whole thing had been solved. It turned out that only two of the courtrooms were fitted with high-definition equipment that would show more than an anonymous arm snaking down to my headphones and whisking them into an anonymous coat. Neither would be free that day. Without the extra fancy equipment there was nothing that would satisfy a jury.

So the cleaner had agreed to accept a caution. There would be no trial, and no conviction, though he would admit his guilt. All that effort by the police, the security men, the lawyers had been almost completely wasted. Nine months of inhuman labour had brought forth a mouse — but at least the mouse was free. I thought, as I watched him scampering across the cafeteria where he too had been waiting, with more patience than we had shown.

## The chic shawl that's to die for

Maideleine Trehearne sat on the floor of her daughter's playroom surrounded by tens of thousands of pounds-worth of caprine luxury and said: "Of course some people come and ask: 'But it's just a pink scarf — why does it cost £500?' I have to be very patient with them."

This, unfortunately, was exactly the question I was about to ask. Why? Well, we don't rip anyone off and these are pashmina, she says patiently. "You can't compare them to woolen scarfs. That's like comparing pure silk to a pair of cotton underpants at Marks & Spencer."

The style guru Lucia van der Post has decreed that the pashmina is "the most chic shawl around town" and if you have to ask, then be careful how you do. It seems that something called the shatooch used to be. It was to die for — ask the antelope that supplied the fine and rare fibres for the cloth and has since become endangered. Well, at least someone had the sense to quit selling them before Sting made a record.

But there is still pashmina or even the odd vicuña to shrug into. Pashmina is made from the hair combed from the underbelly of the *capra hircus* (it means "hairy little goat") that lives in highest Kashmir. "This skill is unique to the Kashmiris and they will not show you how they do the weaving," says Ms Trehearne, who sells direct from her Hampshire house and whose other career is as an English literature academic.

To find the vicuña, you have to go halfway around the world to the Puna — the cold South American steppe. Down to only a few hundred in the mid-Sixties, the

small animal related to the alpaca and llama has made a healthy enough comeback to be back from the brink and back on the shelf at Harrods. A small shawl is £849, a large one £1,949.

Why? Well this is no ordinary wild ruminant. The Incas sacrificed them on a fairly regular basis, but then they had some one million to cull from. We can blame Pizarro, who plundered herds for New World silk and began a trend that didn't end until the Sixties trade ban.

Now there are 160,000 vicuña but, if you count them in ounces of fleece, that is still not many. Each produces only eight ounces every two years (compared to six to eight pounds per year by the merino sheep). An overcoat requires a veritable herd (25 to 30 of them).

It is hard to tell which is more politically correct. The fleece from an animal given special permission to be shorn by the endangered species watchdog CITES, or goats scampering across the political divides of strife-torn Kashmir? Who needs fur when you can play New Age one-upmanship at this sort of level?

Back at Ms Trehearne's house, my knees are now molly-swaddled in pashmina. "Isn't it warm? It's like a thermal vest. You can hatch an egg in one, though my green-grocer said that is a very expensive way to hatch an egg."

She unfurls one covered in the tiny stitches of a master embroiderer. "Of course, something like this is very expensive — we want £4,000 for it — but then again it took one man three years to do." Suddenly, Marks & Spencer seems very far away indeed.

Ann Treneman

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# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098  
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## Halifax flotation to cost £400m

Bill Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

The bill for merging Halifax Building Society with Leeds Permanent and next year's planned £1bn stock market flotation will total more than £400m.

City lawyers, bankers and brokers will share bumper fees for flotation and the accompanying conversion to being a bank at £153m.

The remaining £260m of the bill is restructuring costs associated with the merger with Leeds. The costs break down as £208.9m for reorganising, restructuring and integrating the two businesses, and £51.5m for the loss on the disposal of fixed assets, mainly property.

Halifax has already announced 1,200 job losses as a result of merging the two head offices. It is also closing down branches as there was considerable overlap between the two societies on the high street.

The society will not reveal the precise details of the share hand-outs to its 9 million members until early next month when its weighty transfer document about the flotation will be sent out. The wording is being finalised with the Building Societies Commission, the industry regulator.

The document will confirm that the share bonus will take the form of a flat distribution and an additional variable allocation of shares. The number of shares allocated will be calculated based on the balance in each member's account in November 1994 - when the flotation was first announced - and on the day of the special general meeting next February.

Halifax also yesterday announced results for the first nine months of this year, showing an underlying 5.9 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.08bn before

the exceptional costs for the Leeds merger and partly for the flotation.

The society took a 9 per cent share of net mortgage business in the UK in the nine months. This compares with the 7 per cent share in the first half, which was depressed by the society's decision to stay away from the highly competitive remortgage market.

But this is still well below its 20 per cent share of outstanding mortgage business.

While the cost of the conversion is still only an estimate, the Halifax has decided to take a £69m charge during the nine-month period ending 31 October 1996.

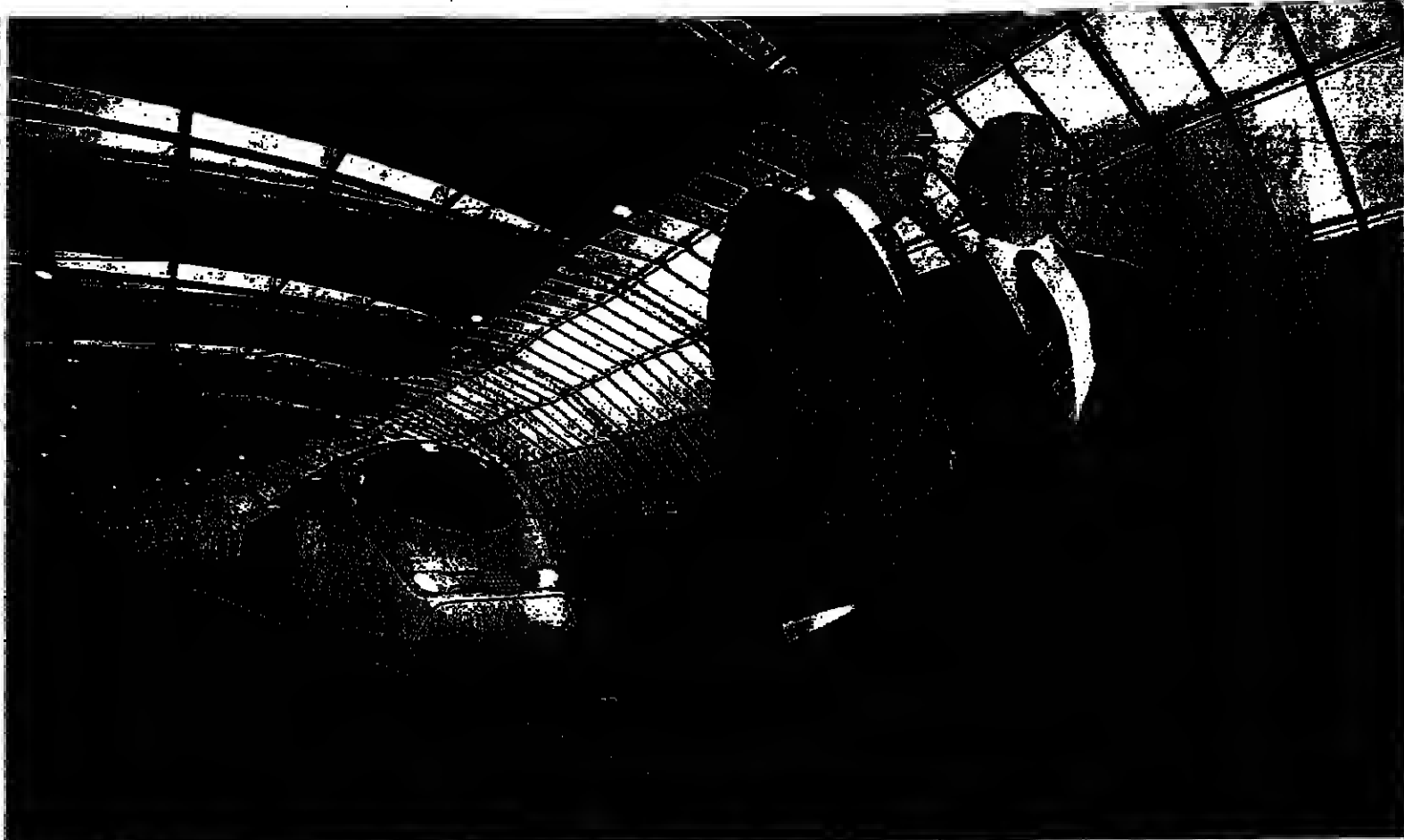
This covers the costs to be incurred up to the special general meeting at the Sheffield Arena in February. The date of the meeting, at which members will vote on the conversion plan, has yet to be announced.

Roughly half of the conversion costs are due to communication, according to a Halifax spokesman. This includes mail shots to the society's members, producing and distributing the 150-page transfer document and a new advertising campaign.

The remainder of the costs will include fees to Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the investment bank that is managing the flotation. One analyst estimated that Deutsche would expect to take in around £45m in fees. Lawyers could charge £30m while stockbrokers will also expect to receive fees of approximately £15m.

The only other converting building society to admit the cost is Alliance & Leicester which put its bill at £58m, £10m of which is due to postage costs. Halifax's stock market value after flotation is estimated to be 3.7 times greater than Alliance & Leicester's.

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Eying the future: Sir Derek Hornby (left) chairman of London & Continental Railways, and the Transport Minister John Watts at Waterloo International yesterday after the granting of royal assent for the Bill to construct the high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Michael Harrison

## Eurostar's £1bn flotation on track as traffic returns

Preparations for the £1bn flotation of the Eurostar train operator, London and Continental Railways, are to begin early next year following its quicker-than-expected recovery from the Channel Tunnel fire last month.

Passenger numbers are back to 65 per cent of their level before the fire and Eurostar expects traffic levels to be fully restored by January. Some 65,000 passengers will travel between London, Paris and Brussels on the service this week and Eurostar expects traffic levels to rise to 100,000 in Christmas week with the help of special promotions such as a £69 same-

day return fare. Before the fire on board a Eurotunnel freight shuttle, Eurostar was handling 100,000 passengers a week.

The proceeds from the flotation will be used to fund the construction of the £2.8bn Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link into London's St Pancras station. LCR, whose shareholders include the Virgin Group, SBC Warburg, National Express and

Bechtel, was selected for the project earlier this year.

A further £1bn-£1.5bn of bank debt will need to be raised while the Government is committed to providing £1.4bn of taxpayers' funds. However, none of the public subsidies will be available until the 68-mile link is two-thirds built.

Construction will begin in mid-1998 and the line is sched-

uled to open in 2003. It will cut 35 minutes off journey times, meaning that Brussels will be just a two-hour train ride away and Paris will be reached in 2 hours 15 minutes.

The flotation is expected to take place in early 1998 in conjunction with the raising of debt finance from an international syndicate of banks.

Adam Mills, chief executive of

LCR said Eurostar was on the "curve to profitability" but it was unlikely to be in profit before the flotation. Passenger numbers this year will top 6 million compared with 3.4 million last year but Eurostar is reckoned to need about 10 million passengers to break even.

Mr Mills said the fund-raising exercise would be a challenging one in the light of the experience of the Channel Tunnel which cost Eurotunnel £10bn to build and opened more than a year late.

"It would be difficult to raise funds of that kind anywhere and at any time and there will be a view that this is in some way linked to Eurotunnel."

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## Dunn & Co calls in the receivers

Nigel Cope

The Christmas shopping season turned sour for one of Britain's best-known menswear retailers yesterday when Dunn & Co collapsed into receivership.

Known for its slightly old-fashioned image, sturdy suits, blazers and flannels, Dunn & Co's reliance on the formal wear market proved its undoing. Receivers KPMG blamed the collapse on poor trading and high debts.

The company was founded in 1886 as a hat seller and developed a string of high street stores. But since it was acquired by new owners in 1994 it has been losing more than £1m a year on sales of £25m. It has debts of £6.4m of which £4m is owed to unsecured creditors. Venture capitalists CinVen own 86 per cent of the company.

Dunn & Co has 130 shops and 429 staff. Its head office in Swansea employs a further 75 workers. The receivers hope to sell the group as a going concern and will be working to keep the shops trading over Christmas, which is its busiest time of the year. There are no immediate plans for shop closures or redundancies. KPMG's Paul Jeffries said: "It's a very well known name and the customer loyalty is tremendous. We expect there to be quite a bit of interest."

He added that the group's problems arose through a decline in the formal wear market. Dunn & Co was formed by George Arthur Dunn, a Quaker, 110 years ago. He had started his career selling hats on the streets in Birmingham. Forty years later he had 200 hat shops and as many franchises in other stores.

Though the stores have attracted a dusty reputation, Mr Dunn was a modern thinker. He was the first man in Britain to own a combine harvester. Before he died in 1939 he also opened a vegetarian hotel.

Prior to his death he established a trust to own and run the company for the benefit of the employees. The group has experienced problems before and was put up for sale in 1991. Then nearly 40 shops were sold to Hodges, a private Welsh group which kept the Dunn & Co name going.

Since its sale to CinVen in 1994 it has been run by Anthony Phillips and Jim Bellingham.

## US court tells GKN to pay out £331m

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

GKN, one of the UK's biggest car components groups, was dealt a serious and unexpected setback yesterday when a US court ordered the company to pay up to \$554m (£331m) in damages in a dispute over its American car exhaust business.

The scale of the award stunned the company and analysts and could wipe out its cash reserves and hit this year's final profit figures. The shares fell

sharply on the news and despite some recovery in later trading closed down 35.5p at £10.09p.

The class action was brought by small garage owners who operated franchises for Meineke Discount Muffler Shops, GKN's retail car exhaust chain, and a tiny part of the group's world-wide operations. The jury in the district court in Charlotte, North Carolina, agreed that advertising commission payments charged to the franchise operators by Meineke's in-house agency were illegal.

"They claimed GKN had defrauded them by covering up the payments after having pledged that the in-house advertising agency would not make a profit or charge commission."

Franchising is big business in the US but has attracted controversy in recent years over heavy-handed tactics by some multinational companies. The jury had used its discretion to award additional damages on top of the original claim for \$331m to cover the commission money. Under US court rules

the damages are then tripled. Though the award against GKN is for \$398m, it could be as high as \$554m.

A spokesman for the company said he was shocked by the announcement and said GKN would launch an appeal against the final judgment, expected in January. "All the advice we had been getting was that we had a very strong case and that advice still stands as far as we're concerned. We're confident we'll win through on appeal, which will be heard by three judges

rather than a small town jury."

However, the group is likely to have to lodge some or all of the cash in a bond with the court before the appeal, which could take up to a year to come to court. An extraordinary charge is likely to be made on GKN's accounts for 1996, though the final dividend, to be paid out in the spring, would not be cut. GKN had cash reserves of £483m on its books in its half-yearly accounts, which could be substantially reduced if the full award is upheld.

## BSkyB warned to play fair on digital television

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Any attempts by BSkyB to unfairly control digital television services to viewers through its controversial set-top box technology would be curbed under new guidelines for the multi-channel television era announced yesterday by Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications regulator.

Though he accepted BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite channel, was likely to have a dominant position in the delivery of programmes to consumers, Mr Cruickshank promised to stamp out any discrimination between Sky programmes and the offerings of other broadcasters.

However it emerged that Mr Cruickshank's powers to curb any anti-competitive behaviour by BSkyB could be watered down if British Telecom wins a legal challenge against similar powers over its telephone services. BT's lawyers have

been in the High Court this week contesting the legality of new licence conditions which give the regulator the ability to ban any moves by phone operators which he fears could be designed to thwart competition. Judgement in the action is due this afternoon.

Though BT has accepted the new powers, which take effect from 31 December, the company has claimed it was obliged to challenge their legality in order to protect shareholders' interests.

Mr Cruickshank is planning to introduce the same condition to regulate BSkyB and though he refused to speculate on what would happen if he lost the BT case, he admitted the legal trading proposals were "an important part" of yesterday's digital TV guidelines.

BSkyB is working to start digital satellite services, offering up to 200 television channels, by late 1997. Contracts are likely to be awarded in the next few days to set-top box manufac-

turers, including Sony and Pace Micro Technology.

The move gives BSkyB a lucrative headstart over the cable industry, which has pledged to provide its own digital delivery system and over the digital terrestrial services planned by the BBC and ITV using the conventional TV aerial network.

The boxes could be sold for £200 but will cost some £400 to make, with the difference subsidised by a Sky-organised consortium.

The vision spelt out by Mr Cruickshank involved the probability of just "one or two" systems available to bring programmes into homes, but with separation of the technical delivery mechanism from programme making.

The guidelines oblige companies to provide separate accounts for the delivery businesses and to provide information about prices. If they fail to comply, Ofcom, the watchdog, can make an enforcement order or take operators to court.

## OECD predicts deadline for euro will not be met

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

None of the biggest EU economies is likely to qualify for membership of the single currency in time for the 1 January 1999 start date, according to an authoritative new report.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predicts, in its end-year economic outlook, that none of the key members of the euro will have a government budget deficit below the 3 per cent limit set out in the Maastricht Treaty by 1997, the decisive year. It praises the progress most continental European countries have made in reducing government budget shortfalls, but reckons only a few smaller members are likely to make it below the ceiling.

Although recovery in the EU economies will be modest thanks to these efforts to cut government borrowing, the organisation says the outlook for the industrial economies is one

of balanced growth and low inflation.

In particular, it expects the US to grow by almost as much next year as in 1996 with barely any increase in inflation and only a small rise in interest rates. The report lends support to what financial markets have dubbed the "Goldilocks scenario", an economy that is neither too hot nor too cold.

Japan is the one significant case where the OECD expects the pace of growth to slow. Canada is likely to be the fastest-growing of the big industrial economies in 1997-98, followed by the UK.

In the case of Germany, yesterday's report says: "On the assumption of a sufficiently supportive monetary stance, the Maastricht fiscal deficit criteria will be met if all the government's proposed measures are implemented." But the forecast puts the deficit at 3.4 per cent of GDP in 1997, just outside the limit.

It forecasts a 3.2 per cent

deficit in France, commenting that meeting the treaty's target "depends not only on the resolute implementation of fiscal consolidation plans, but also on the likely course of interest rates".

The speed with which countries succeed in moving towards the Maastricht limits will determine how sluggish the EU economies are next year. The report foresees the recovery as being "relatively modest" because of efforts to close the gap between government spending and revenues. It predicts that unemployment rates on the Continent will scarcely budge from their current high levels.

Even so it expects both the main European economies to grow faster next year than this, admitting that their performance in 1996 has been sluggish. Investment and exports are likely to recover during the next 12 months. Low interest rates and a tight fiscal policy should permit faster growth without the threat of inflation.

### IMPORTANT NEWS FOR MORTGAGE CUSTOMERS

#### Interest Rate Change

The rates of interest for new and existing mortgage customers (in appropriate cases the basic rate) will increase by 0.25% to 6.09% with effect from 20th December 1996. The new rates continue to reflect the Society's commitment to mutuality and the benefits this brings to our customers.

Fixed rate mortgages are not affected during the contractual fixed rate period.

In cases where mortgage interest rate changes are subject to notice, the increase will take place after the appropriate notice period which will commence on 20th December 1996.

There will be no change to the interest rates on existing Secured Personal Loans regulated by the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

For customers participating in the Society's annual review procedure, this interest rate increase will be taken into account when calculating new monthly payments from March 1997 or, in appropriate cases, the anniversary of the mortgage.

Norwich and Peterborough

Chief Office: Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 8WZ.  
Telephone: Peterborough 01773 371371.  
Member of The Building Societies Association. Member of LINC.  
Assets secured £15.8 million.

This formal notice is issued in compliance with the requirements of The London Stock Exchange Limited ("the London Stock Exchange"). This formal notice should be read in conjunction with the circular dated 19 December 1996 ("the Circular") which contains full details of The Environmental Investment Company Limited and the securities being issued.

Application has been made to the London Stock Exchange for the Zero Dividend Preference Shares to be admitted to the Official List.

The Environmental Investment Company Limited  
(a closed-end company incorporated in Jersey with number 53007)

Capitalisation Issue  
of  
12,000,000 Zero Dividend Preference Shares of 1p each  
on the basis of 3 zero dividend preference shares  
for every 1 ordinary share

AVAILABILITY OF CIRCULAR  
Copies of the Circular are available (for collection only during normal business hours) from the Company Announcements Office, London Stock Exchange, Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1HP on the two business days following the date of publication of the Circular and may also be obtained during normal business hours for collection until 10 January 1997 from the registered office of the Company at La Motte Chambers, St. Helier, Jersey JE1 1BJ, Channel Islands and from:

Hoare Govett Corporate Finance Limited  
4 Broadgate  
London EC2M 1LE

Hoare Govett Corporate Finance Limited, which is regulated by The Securities and Futures Authority Limited, is acting for the Company and on one day in connection with the Capitalisation Issue and will not be responsible to anyone other than the Company for providing the protections afforded to its customers or for affording advice in relation to the contents of the Circular or any matters referred to therein.

20 December 1996

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	4051.30	+33.10	+0.8	4073.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4406.80	+26.30	+0.6	4568.60	4076.30
FTSE 350	2009.40	+15.40	+0.8	2022.10	1816.50
FTSE SmallCap	2148.79	+6.23	+0.3	2244.36	1854.06
FTSE All-Share	1979.85	+14.54	+0.7	1994.54	1791.55
New York	6414.05	+67.29	+1.1	6547.79	5032.94
Tokyo	19570.67	-522.36	-2.6	21666.80	19570.67
Hong Kong	12846.56	+80.54	+0.6	13530.95	10294.97
Frankfurt	3807.75	-13.00	-0.5	2999.91	2253.36

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year
UK	6.03	6.94	7.62	7.51	7.70
US	5.59	5.84	6.40	6.71	6.65
Japan	0.22	0.44	2.38	1.88	1.88
Germany	3.29	3.25	5.84	6.09	6.75

BOND YIELDS					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year
UK	6.03	6.94	7.62	7.51	7.70
US	5.59	5.84	6.40	6.71	6.65
Japan	0.22	0.44	2.38	1.88	1.88
Germany	3.29	3.25	5.84	6.09	6.75

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Index	Price (p)
Bell Southern	717.5	-46	-6.4	Rank Group	416.5
Amgen	797.5	50	6.7	CH2M	1009.5
Grain Estate	202	8.5	4.4	Fluor Corp	193

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$ (London)	1.6625	-1.00p	1.5391	£ (London)	0.6015
£ (New York)	1.6635	-0.80p	1.5416	£ (New York)	0.6011
DM (London)	2.5936	-0.02p	2.2165	DM (London)	1.6801
¥ (London)	198.592	-0.513	186.745	¥ (London)	114.040
₹ (London)	84.1	-0.3	82.2	₹ (London)	108.9

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent	23.69	+0.35	17.80	RPI	153.9
Gold	369.20	+0.15	387.80	GDP	108.9
Gold £	222.07	+1.76	251.84	Base Rates	6.09p

Handwritten note: 12/20/96







## business

# Airtours buys up Italian cruise operator for £181m

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

The rise and rise of Airtours continued yesterday after the tour operator, Britain's second largest after Thomson, announced a further move into the booming cruise market with the acquisition of Europe's largest cruise company, Italy's Costa Crociere. Airtours' shares jumped 50p to 797.5p on the news, at which level they have more than doubled since the beginning of the year.

The £181m deal, agreed by Costa's controlling shareholders, was struck in joint partnership with Airtours' largest shareholder, Carnival Corporation, the largest US cruise operator. Both companies plan to contribute half the consideration from their own resources.

It is the first time Carnival and Airtours have acted in concert like this since Carnival took a 25.5 per cent stake in the British holiday company and the deal is certain to intensify

speculation that the two will eventually merge. David Crossland, founder and chairman of Airtours, is already on the board of Carnival.

Airtours and Carnival said yesterday they had entered into an agreement with a syndicate of shareholders owning just over 50 per cent of Costa's Milan-traded shares. That syndicate's major shareholder is the Costa family itself, while other members include hotel and leisure group Accor, the Agnelli family which controls Fiat, and supermarket group Carrefour.

Costa, which is based in Genoa, operates 10 ships, primarily in the Mediterranean, where it controls 30 per cent of the cruise market. It is strong in Italy, where it sells 70 per cent of all cruises on the Mediterranean, and in France, where its share is 40 per cent.

In the year to December 1995, it is estimated that about 900,000 cruises were taken in the Mediterranean and northern Europe out of a world-wide

total of 5.4 million. The cruise market in Europe is expected to grow to 1.2 million cruise passengers by the year 2000.

Last year, Costa made profits before tax and extraordinary items of £18.2m from sales of £380m. The company will be run as a stand alone business, headquartered in Genoa, but Airtours expects to supply its cruise ships through its own tour operation and to stock its brochures in its Going Places travel agencies.

The Costa deal follows hot on the heels of bumper full-year figures from Airtours last week for the 12 months to September. Profits rose 46 per cent to £86.8m after a 30 per cent rise in sales to £1.7bn. That compared with profits earlier this week from rival First Choice of £10m from sales of £1bn.

Airtours indicated at the time of its results that it was planning to spend up to £250m on overseas acquisitions to push its profits from outside Britain to 50 per cent of the group total.

## NSM shares sink to 8p

Patrick Toohar

NSM saw its already lowly share price fall by a third yesterday after the heavily indebted mining group revealed a huge half-year loss and admitted the future of its deep coal mine in south Wales rested on the successful outcome of crisis talks with bankers. NSM's shares, as high as 80p a year ago, closed 4p lower at 8p.

The news served to highlight the growing difficulties facing Britain's small knot of mining companies. Last week almost £200m was wiped off the stock market value of RJB Mining, Britain's biggest coal producer, after the company's

own broker warned about the impact of cheap overseas imports of coal in the wake of sterling's recent strength.

Earlier this year administrators were called in at Coal Investments, the mining venture headed by Malcolm Edwards, a former British Coal director.

In the year to September NSM racked up losses of £71.9m, all but £500,000 of which relate to a provision on the sale of businesses which have either been completed or are expected to be finalised.

NSM again warned that the sale of its US coal operations, which is being handled by US stockbrokers Paine Webber, would be at a substantial

discount to net asset value.

John Jermaine, the chairman, said several "unforeseen operational difficulties and delays" had significantly affected working capital requirements. "Consequently, the company has been in detailed discussions with its bankers regarding its immediate and long-term funding which have yet to be determined."

Mr Jermaine said trading in the US was "extremely difficult" and blamed two "once in a hundred years" storms in successive years, previously unknown geological problems in the deep mines and low selling prices.

If the talks are successful, NSM's future will largely depend on the pit in south Wales.

## Cook defends 'implausible' forecast

Patrick Toohar

The war of words between steel castings group William Cook and its pursuer, Birmingham-based Triplex Lloyd, reached a new level of intensity yesterday as both sides traded accusations and counter-accusations.

The fur started to fly after Triplex Lloyd dismissed William Cook's latest profit forecast as "implausible". William Cook responded by accusing Triplex Lloyd of making "a number of

ill-considered and inaccurate points" and of failing to understand its business.

"Once again Triplex Lloyd is indulging in cheap jibes in an attempt to divert shareholders' attention away from the key issue which is the value of William Cook's business and prospects," claimed Andrew Cook, chairman and chief executive.

William Cook said its forecast of pre-tax profits of not less than £10.7m in the year to March 1997 showed that Triplex

Lloyd's £58m offer was "indiscreetly low".

Triplex Lloyd is offering 312p in cash and shares, but William Cook reckons it is worth anywhere between 500p-700p on the basis of the new forecast.

Triplex Lloyd asked William Cook's shareholders to question the quality of earnings which William Cook has forecast.

It noted that on 25 October William Cook issued a "downbeat" interim statement in which Mr Cook said William

Cook was seeing a thinning in order books and that he viewed the resulting cut in production with concern.

Six days later a report by UBS, William Cook's own broker, forecast less than 5 per cent growth in pre-tax profits to £8.8m for the year to March, implying no growth in the second half over the previous year.

But Triplex Lloyd said that just eight days after it announced its offer, Mr Cook had already begun to guarantee

continued profit growth in the second half of the current year.

"We do not accept this profit forecast as representing a sustainable level of profitability for William Cook," said Graham Lockyer, Triplex Lloyd's chief executive. "The profit forecast is an implausible short-term reaction to our offer."

Mr Cook said the forecast was struck before the bid defence costs but after refurbishment costs of £2.2m charged to the profit and loss account.

### IN BRIEF

• The prospect of cheaper international phone services was raised yesterday after the DTI licensed 44 international phone operators, ending the duopoly over foreign traffic between BT and Mercury. Of 46 companies who applied, 44 were granted licences, including US giant AT&T, Racal and Energis, the phone company owned by National Grid. Mike Grabner, Energis chief executive, said the news was a "huge opportunity", raising the prospect of joint ventures to lay further international phone cable capacity. He said new operators would also be able to expand customer services, including overseas private networks for businesses for the first time.

• Dominion Resources, the US utility company which has made a £1.3bn agreed takeover bid for East Midlands Electricity, yesterday bought 15 per cent of shares in the Nottingham-based regional power supplier. Dominion spent £199m on the stake which it bought at the bid price of 670p a share. It also disclosed it had received acceptances so far from investors with 35.3 per cent of East Midlands shares, which means the Virginia company speaks for just over 50 per cent of its bid target. A spokesman denied the share buying was a sign it feared a counter bidder would arrive on the scene. East Midlands shares rose 3p to 664p.

• President Clinton is expected to announce that Janet Yellen, currently a Federal Reserve Governor, will become the new chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. Subject to Senate confirmation, she will replace Joseph Stiglitz, who is moving to become chief economist at the World Bank. Separately, the White House said yesterday that the President will make the major decisions on the next fiscal year's budget by the end of this week. It is due to be presented to Congress early in February.

• The Bundesbank set a two-year policy target yesterday, extending the usual period for its money supply target in order to map out the way to the introduction of the euro on 1 January 1999. It left all key interest rates unchanged after yesterday's council meeting.

• Zhenhai Refining and Chemical will today become the first equity-related Chinese listing on the London Stock Exchange. The company has raised \$200m (£120m) through a convertible bond issue, which was 10-times oversubscribed.

• BAT Industries has sold Henri Wintermans Cigar company for £55m to Skandinavisk Tobakskompagni, the Dutch group. BAT holds a 32 per cent stake in Skandinavisk.

### Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Accrington Trust (t)	17.5m (19.5m)	0.54m (1.3m)	1.5p (2.5p)	0.46p (1.46p)
Acia (t)	3.45m (3.04m)	230m (130m)	6.57p (3.51p)	0.81p (0.72p)
Academy & Hestonham (t)	282m (294m)	7.7m (7.6m)	14.6p (12.2p)	5.5p (10p)
London Merchant Soc (t)	- (-)	16.1m (25.9m)	3.88p (7.58p)	0.8p (0.8p)
ASDA (t)	60.6m (54.4m)	-76.5m (2.5m)	-123p (3.5p)	nil (-)
Shawdon (t)	1.0m (0.85m)	0.02m (-4.10m)	0.003p (-0.014p)	nil (-)
Shawdon & Wright (t)	- (-)	0.22m (0.18m)	9.4p (7.85p)	nil (nil)
Trigell (t)	19.4m (12.9m)	-2.41m (1.44m)	-4.25p (2.15p)	nil (1.45p)
Warner Estates (t)	23.1m (14.2m)	10.1m (8.55m)	16.92p (13.85p)	12.2p (-)

(t) - Total (t) - Interim

## Asda trumps the loyalty card pack

### THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Asda's refusal to get involved in the loyalty card war smacks a little of making virtue out of necessity. But cynicism about its motives aside, Asda is probably right to hold back from the fray. The jury is still out on whether the costs of loyalty cards are outweighed by the benefit of higher sales, but the evidence so far is not compelling.

Asda has always played a different marketing game from its more up-market peers, and it remains the only non-discount grocery chain to sell itself unashamedly on price, but it is currently making more than usual of its Leeds origins. Its price promise now finds itself literally inscribed in Yorkshire stone outside its superstores - true northern grit.

With the company for the time being still run by the prospective parliamentary candidate for true blue Tynbridge Wells, that may ring somewhat hollow, but the underlying message that what consumers want from a supermarket is good value, good quality and service has a ring of common sense. The tiny discounts offered by loyalty cards have always been a con that underestimated the intelligence of the average shopper.

Asda's continuing ability to outstrip its peers on crucial measures such as return on capital employed and like-for-like sales growth is surprising but pleasantly so. Like-for-like turnover growth of 10.2 per cent in the six months to November remains comfortably ahead of Tesco's 7 per cent and leaves Sainsbury's 2.3 per cent standing. For the first time, Asda's return on capital has risen above the average of its three largest rivals and while its trend is healthy upwards the others are getting a progressively worse return from the assets they employ.

Other battles Asda appears to be winning are for the hearts and minds of clothes shoppers and fresh food buyers, the latter not traditionally its strongest suit. Having taken full control of the George clothing brand, real progress is being made towards the target of becoming the number two family clothes brand behind M&S. Fresh food sales are growing like Topsy with meat, especially, taking off. The rather belated push to achieve 40 per cent of sales from own-brand products also appears to be going according to plan with successful cereal launches among 2,000 new lines taking penetration up to 35 per cent. A similar push is planned for next year.

In all sorts of ways Asda continues to force the pace in the supermarket arena but it remains firmly in the pack as far as stock market ratings goes, on a prospective p/e ratio of 13 on the basis of a consensus forecast of £343m this

year and £378m next time. If you want to be in the sector, Asda is your best way in, but in a cut-throat mature market and with its driving force destined for the Opposition benches, there is better value elsewhere.

### Hard Rock lets Rank down

The stock market was right to interpret yesterday's 11-month "trading update" from leisure giant Rank as nothing more than a thinly disguised profits warning. Shares in the bingo-to-bulins group fell 25.5p to 416.5p as investors reacted badly to two worrying developments.

The biggest surprise came at the Hard Rock themed restaurant chain. While just about any old branded concept serving up half-decent beer and grub seems to be coming in, Hard Rock has spectacularly missed out on the bonanza. True, a BSE beef scare closed the Paris branch for 15 days in the autumn, but nevertheless like-for-like sales in the 32 Hard Rock cafes fell 4

per cent - analysts noted that in London turnover rose a sub-inflationary 2 per cent while sales fell in New York. Not surprisingly, Hard Rock has recently expanded its national and local sales forces in the US to beef up the marketing effort.

The other concern is the slipping timetable for the planned £1bn sale of Rank's remaining 20 per cent stake in copier company Rank Xerox. Originally due to take place in the first quarter of 1997, the talk now is of a sale some time before the end of 1998. The sale is seen as a way for Rank to return cash to investors, either in the form of a share buy-back or special dividend, but they should not hold their breath.

Disposals of non-core assets form a key part of the strategic review recently completed by new chief executive Andrew Teare, formerly of English China Clay.

Yesterday saw the Shearings holiday coach business finally sold to its management for £83m. All told, Rank has raised more than £200m during the second half, though borrowings still remain around £1bn after Rank splashed out £123m in October for the 10m Colleigh chain of themed pubs. That deal

raised eyebrows in the City and prompted accusations that Rank, for all its talk of restructuring, was still prepared to pay full prices for cyclical businesses at the top of the economic cycle.

Broker Kleinwort Benson sticks with its bottom-of-the-range forecast of pre-tax, pre-exceptional profits of £294m this year, rising to £345m in 1997. That implies a price/earnings ratio of 17 falling to 15. Unexciting.

### Fairey bid shows up Burnfield

Fairey issued its hurried offer document for rival engineer Burnfield yesterday and with it a slew of facts and figures showing what an appalling investment Burnfield has been over the past five years. No one would argue with that - both capital value and dividend income have fallen 40 per cent over that period.

Burnfield rightly countered that Fairey's choice of period was highly selective, as they always are in hostile bid situations, and attempted to put forward its own three-year period, starting at the company's recent low point when it parted company with its previous chief executive. As always, a hostile bid has drowned hapless investors in a torrent of innuendo and half-truth.

The real story is, not surprisingly, a combination of the two sides' arguments, but Fairey wins on points. Burnfield has made some pretty awful acquisitions along the way, resulting in a hefty £12m exceptional charge that will send it £8m into the red this year. It has a poor history of disappointing shareholders with profits warnings and has seen its earnings per share go nowhere in the past five years. After a collapse in its dividend in 1993, the payout has edged upwards but is only a little more than half the 1992 level.

Against that backdrop it is now attempting to sell a £20m seven-for-10 rights issue to shareholders to fund an acquisition into a new area, vibration control equipment. The City reaction to the deal - 10 per cent off the share price to 100p - tells the story.

Normally the best thing to do in a bid like this is to wait for the arguments to unfold. In this case, that is not possible because Fairey says it will only go ahead with the one-for-four share bid if shareholders vote down the proposed acquisition and rights issue on 30 December. So, shareholders have to make a snap decision. Faced with stumping up £630 for every £1,000 of shares they own, the temptation to snatch a decent premium at yesterday's close of 141.5p is enormous. Sell in the market.

## Vauxhall creates 900 jobs in new van partnership

Michael Harrison

Vauxhall is to create 900 jobs with a £180m investment in new van making facilities at its IBC Vehicles plant in Luton. Together with extra employment among suppliers, the total number of jobs created could be as high as 2,700.

The go-ahead for the investment came yesterday after Vauxhall's parent company, General Motors, and the French car group Renault signed an agreement in Paris to develop a new medium van range.

As part of the agreement, Renault will start supplying Vauxhall with a version of its Trafic van early next year. It will be sold in Britain as the Vauxhall Arena and will replace the Midi, which IBC stopped building earlier this year.

The new van will have a

weight range of 2.5-2.8 tonnes and is due to go into production at the turn of the century. Output of the van from the IBC plant, which already makes the Frontera four-wheel drive vehicle, will be 60,000 a year and 75 per cent of production will be for export.

Together with development expenditure, the total cost of the van project could be as high as £400m. Nick Kelly, chairman of Vauxhall and IBC Vehicles, declined to say what total investment would be but he said it was such that neither manufacturer could have afforded to launch the new van alone.

Just under half the £180m investment will be at the IBC plant and the rest, funded evenly by Vauxhall and Renault, will be spent on supplier tooling. The agreement will also see Renault supplying Vauxhall with an entirely new van for the

heavy sector of the market in two years time. The van, to be manufactured at Renault's Batilly plant in France, will replace the Renault Master and will compete with bigger end of the Ford Transit range.

The European van market is currently running at around 300,000 a year. The 60,000 production targeted by Vauxhall and Renault for the new van at Luton is significantly higher than the combined output of the Trafic and Midi ranges.

The Luton plant currently employs 1,800 on production of the Frontera, which is running at 33,000 a year. Although production of the Midi was phased out earlier this year there were no job losses as workers were shifted onto the Frontera line. IBC Vehicles is 82 per cent owned by General Motors and 18 per cent by Isuzu Motors of Japan.

## Bank of Scotland Mortgages Direct

### NOTICE OF INTEREST RATE VARIATION

The following rates for mortgages provided by Bank of Scotland, Mortgages Direct will apply as from 2nd January 1997 for both new and existing borrowers.

Bank of Scotland  
Mortgages Direct Variable Rate  
7.74% per annum.

Bank of Scotland  
Mortgages Direct Preferential Variable Rate  
6.74% per annum.

Bank of Scotland  
Mortgages Direct Personal Choice Variable Rate  
7.24% per annum.

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### IN THIS WEEKEND'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



### LATTER DAY PROPHETS

Every age has its prophets: original thinkers or agitators whose ideas shape civilisation for a generation or more. Who will be the voices of the new millennium?



Each month, 1,000 works of art are stolen. Few are recovered. Why? Geraldine Norman on the secrets of Interpol's Most Wanted Works of Art register

Plus: a new short story by Steven Heighton, Michael Bywater's seasonal reflections, and Martin Rowson's radical reinterpretation of *A Christmas Carol*

and in real life

Flirting with misogyny - a panto dame defends his craft. Plus: Christmas flashpoints and how to avoid them: the new men of rap; perfect party dresses; and the long-awaited outsize directory



## market report / shares

## Data Bank

FTSE 100	4051.3	+33.1
FTSE 250	4406.8	+26.3
FTSE 350	2009.4	+15.4
SEAQ VOLUME	1.1bn shares,	
	35,239 bargains	
Gifts Index	94.03	+0.22

## Share spotlight

share price, pence



## Festive cheer escapes Matthew Clark as Footsie jumps

There was a notable absentee from yesterday's festive march. Matthew Clark, the drinks group, remained firmly in the stock market doghouse; at 260p it is just above its lowest for six years.

There are fears of more profit downgrades. When in September, Matthew Clark rocked the market, and the drinks industry, by complaining the sloopage volume had devastated its cider sales, profit forecasts were sliced from more than £70m to around £50m. The shares, riding high at more than 800p earlier in the year, collapsed.

They are so distressed that the cider and wine group looks ripe for a takeover bid. For some time there have been nagging suggestions that Guinness, the beer and spirit giant which has recently dipped its toe into the cider market, could be interested in swallowing Matthew Clark. But a

more intriguing story is now going the rounds - a strike from Philip Morris, the big US group which takes in Millers, the world's second-largest brewer.

Millers, striving to improve its presence in this country, is said to be thinking in terms of building its own British brewery and has earmarked land near Matthew Clark's Somerset heartland.

It could, according to drink trade gossip, see Matthew Clark's distribution network, which includes the Freertraders wholesaling operation, as a major part of its British expansion drive.

Millers beers are now brewed under licence by Scottish & Newcastle. Its big rival, Anheuser-Busch, has already exchanged a licence deal for its own brewery, the old Watney's plant at Mortlake, South-west London.

Another intriguing story of



## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

takeover action embraced Storehouse. The retailer has been in the dumps largely because of negative comment from Barclays de Zoete Wedd. With stories of a 300p-a-share offer swirling around, the price rose 8.5p to 361p with Seaq putting volume at a remarkably high 18 million shares.

Burton, up 4p at 154.5p, and Kingfisher, 2p higher at 613.5p, were the names in the frame. Talk also drifted around that Storehouse planned a de-merger, perhaps hiving off its once stand-alone BHS stores chain.

In busy trading Footsie jumped 33.1 points to 4,051.3, only 21.8 from its peak. It was

one of those rare occasions when a Seaq turnover soared above 1 billion; tax efficient bid-and-breakfast trades contributed to the volume.

Railtrack was squeezed 27.5p higher to 398p, a peak, on dividend buying. BTR's rival continued with an 8.5p gain to 273.5p.

Rank fell 25.5p to 416.5p as profit estimates were cut following an investment meeting. GKN lost 35.5p to 1,009.5p after a US legal judgement which could cost up to \$554m. Whitebread, off 14.5p to 761p, reflected the departure of chief executive Peter Jarvis, architect of the reshaping of the brewery group.

Manchester Utd, responding to the plan to create an FTSE football subsection, raced to a 641.5p peak, up 26.5p.

Airtours, aiming to buy Costa Crociere, Europe's largest cruise company, in partnership with its biggest shareholder, Carnival Corporation, climbed 50p to 797.5p.

Dargery, the pet group, continued to edge ahead, up 4p to 354p, on vague bid talk; Hilti-down was firm at 193p ahead of an analysts meeting next month.

United News & Media, reflecting SBC Warburg support, gained 23.5p to 683.5p.

Four newcomers scored gains. Crown, an amusement machine group, ended at 80.5p against a 7p placing. Fountain Forestry moved to 84.5p from its 75p placing and Linden, a housebuilder, from 150p to 164.5p. Xenova, a drugs group placed at 215p, edged ahead to 216.5p.

Rubergold, the building materials group, tumbled 10.5p to 100.5p following a profit warning. It plans to hold its yearly dividend at 6.1p. Hunters Arms, a printer, gained 12.5p to 105p as Pannone Gordon forecast year's profits of £4.8m against £1.8m.

Lease, the Andrew Regan vehicle, started another 150p to 1,250p (after 1,300p) stories go around about a deal with Littlewoods but the company has yet to make a statement. Brunelcliffe Aggregates gained 2p to 28.5p as Bardon exercised options, acquiring a 22.7 per cent interest. Bardon, itself an old takeover favourite, was unchanged at 33.5p.

Geo Interactive Media added 8p to 61.5p after director David Goldman, chairman of computer group Sage, doubled his shareholding to 100,000, buying shares at 60p; Martin Shelton, a diaries business, rose 4.5p to 74.5p.

## Taking Stock

Chemical Design, floated at 110p in August, held at 155p. The developer of data-based software for the drugs industry has landed a contract with Abbott Laboratories, a leading US group, and a collaborative research deal with Metacrine, a New Jersey start-up company. Robin Lodge, chairman of the DCS computer services group, has become non-executive chairman.

Nearly a quarter of the shares of Ofo-traded Barnham Broom, an East Anglian hotel company, have changed hands. The stakes held by SPP Ventures and the old British & Commonwealth Holdings have been sold to clients of stockbroker Henderson Crosthwaite and the Sunley family. John Gunn, formerly at B&C, is chairman of Barnham, which expects record profits this year. It made £411,000 last year. The shares held at 48p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price-earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: r Ex-rights x Ex-dividend x Ex all in United Securities Market's Suspended pp Parity Paid pm Nil Paid Shares 2 AM Stock Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333, and when prompted as to do, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time	01	Shoring Rate	04	Prevalence Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	02	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	30
UK Company News	03	Wall St Report	06	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	04	Telco Market	07	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a land-line telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including a portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4278 (800am - 500pm) Dials cost 50p per minute (day time), and 40p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
Elmfield Bsc	220,000	Heron	220,000	Abbey National	70,000
Stem	200,000	Coventry	100,000	Alfred Dunham	70,000
Stem	200,000	British Steel	100,000	North Group	70,000
ASA Group	200,000	Ladbrokes	100,000	RAF	70,000
Stockhouse	200,000	Lloyds TSB	100,000	Budgie	70,000

FTSE 100 index hour by hour	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	16.00
Open 4023.5 up 31	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5
Close 4023.5 up 31	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5	4023.5

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn	4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn	4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn

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4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn	4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn

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4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn	4023.5	4023.5	FTSE 100	4023.5	+33.1	1.1bn



# Labour's proposals aren't radical enough for the City

The Sumitomo copper affair, the Barings collapse and the Deutsche Morgan Grenfell unit trust scandal have given a new lease of life to a long-running argument about whether there should be a root and branch reform of financial regulation.

We've been here before, of course, but a curiosity of this latest debate is that some of the most senior figures in the City are proposing much more radical solutions than the Labour Party. The politicians who on the hustings are most inclined to put the boot in have actually taken quite a conciliatory approach to the issue.

The story begins with Labour's proposal that all the regulators governed by the 1986 Financial Services Act should be rolled up into a single institution.

The Securities and Futures Authority, Imro, the fund management regulator, and the Personal Investment Authority, which looks after savings, would be merged into the senior regulator, the Securities and Investments Board. The result would be a single statutory organisation, similar to the US Securities and Exchange Commission, though perhaps with rather more input from practitioners than in the US.

The Government does not like this idea at all, and prefers the status quo. Among the regulators themselves, the SIB is thought to be discreetly supportive of the thrust of the Labour proposals - unsurprisingly, since it would be the winning bureaucracy. However, executives in charge of the junior regulatory bodies such as the SFA, the PIA and Imro think it a rather poor idea.

The SFA and the PIA are canvassing openly for much more radical reorganisation than the Labour Party has proposed, and they have a number of influential City figures cheering them on.

One explanation of the concerns of the junior regulators is, of course, that they may be worried

between a consumer protection and a market policing organisation, to reflect these differences of emphasis.

The \$2.6bn losses made by Sumitomo in the copper market and the hundreds of millions Deutsche Bank is pouring into Morgan Grenfell to pay for the losses at its unit trust business illustrate the difference between the two types of regulation. The former was an entirely professional market and the latter a savings business.

However, Barings gives a third dimension to the argument, as the Commons Treasury Committee pointed out this week.

It is hard, in modern markets, to make a clear distinction between banking, which is supervised by the Bank of England, and the securities and investment markets, which are covered by the Financial Services Act.

Banks are deeply involved in securities trading, while the securities industry has been stealing business from banks by persuading their customers to borrow in the markets instead. Indeed, convergence between the two industries has gone so far that this week a group of banks has been discussing setting up a formal market in which they can trade bank loans between themselves - treating them exactly as if they were securities such as bonds.

Taking the ideas canvassed by the SFA and the PIA to their logical conclusion, what is the justification for the continued separation of banking and securities regulation? If a bank or a securities firm gets into trouble, the investigations overlap at every point, making a hard task more difficult.

To merge banking and securities regulation would have important implications for the Bank of England, as the select committee pointed out, because it might lose its banking supervision role to some new body.

The select committee went no further than threatening

the bank with losing the supervision function if it did not improve its performance. The MPs drew back from making this a firm recommendation. Labour, too, has steadily backed away from its earlier investigations of whether to break up the Bank of England.

There are some well-heeled arguments against creating a new independent super-regulator for securities and banking, and they should not be dismissed lightly.

Indeed, the Bank has a much better reputation for its supervision techniques among its overseas peers than it has in the UK, so it cannot be doing everything wrong. Problems such as Barings pale into insignificance compared with the savings and loans collapse in the US, the Japanese and Swedish banking crises and the French débacle over Credit Lyonnais.

The Bank has shown no signs so far of wanting to hand over supervision to anybody else. But some detect a softer line emerging. It is possible to imagine Eddie George, the Governor, launching an examination of the merger of banking and securities regulation, in certain circumstances. He might agree to give up supervision if Britain stays outside the single currency but gives its central bank true independence.

An argument against radical change, put forcefully by Sir Andrew Large, chairman of the SIB, is that no matter how good the alternative system, the years of change will be disruptive and dangerous, so that slow evolution is preferable.

Labour's difficulty is that by embracing a half-way solution, which includes substantial changes but may well not be radical enough to cope with the markets of the 21st century, it will have the worst of both worlds - much disruption for little real benefit.

It would make more sense to do nothing at all until a very good look has been taken at the more radical ideas emerging from the City.

# Whitbread chief executive sets his sights on greener pastures

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Waiting in the wings: Whitbread's David Thomas

Peter Jarvis is stepping down as chief executive of Whitbread after 12 years in the post. This may be no surprise, but at only 55, what is he going to do? "I'm looking forward to playing more golf and getting to know my wife," he said. "I gave up golf 30 years ago when I got married. I'm a member of three clubs so I will probably play at Goodwood near where we live."

He will also spend more time on what he describes as "my big boat" which is moored at Chichester.

Leaving Whitbread after 20 years will be a wrench for Cambridge-educated Mr Jarvis, who joined the brewer in 1976 after 12 years at Unilever. During his tenure as chief executive he signed the franchise agreement for TGI Friday and bought Boddingtons, Bevi Inns and Peter Dinklage, as well as Pelican and Brightbeams more recently. He has also worked closely with his successor, David Thomas, on two landmark acquisitions last year which saw Whitbread snap up David Lloyd Leisure and 16 Marriot hotels.

Mr Thomas, 52, will take over next summer. He joined Whitbread in 1984 as a regional director in the Inns division. More recently he has run the restaurants and leisure side.

Andrew Cook, top man at metalbasher William Cook, is not known for a lack of self-promotion. So there is one big surprise in his company's corporate video now being circulated in the City as part of the group's defence against the bid from Triplex Lloyd. He doesn't appear in it.

It is always interesting to note which companies try to slip in an annual general meeting or egn in the fallow period between Christmas and New Year. Sometimes there are genuine reasons for this. But on other occasions, the dates

are chosen because the company doesn't really want anyone to come.

Top of the list in this category is Costain, the accident-prone construction company. Costain is selling its US coal business and is holding an egn to approve the sale on 27 December. No doubt the reason is that Costain is keen to avoid too many New Year travellers trudging along to protest about the construction of the Newbury bypass which Costain is building. This follows the group's egn earlier in the year which

Principles look like fashion spreads. "We thought, well, we're a fashion retailer. We ought to try something different," says spokeswoman Amanda Bassett.

Bibulous businessmen should make a beeline for South Korea, according to a new guide, "Central Expatriate" by Arthur Andersen. There, visiting executives are expected to take to the tincture in a big way after a hard day at the conference table. Unlike the depressing Anglo-American tread towards abstinence, the Koreans like to enjoy themselves, and the Andersen guide counsels that at business parties one should be prepared to sing. A refusal often offends.

Apparently, however, it is not mandatory to get as drunk as one's host. Sometimes one is taken to the Korean version of a geisha house, where the women are regarded as "talking furniture" rather than sex objects.

The Japanese have a similar attitude to alcohol and are among the heaviest drinkers in Asia. However, it should be remembered that the Japanese seem to have a greater ability to recover from hangovers and foreign businessmen should be on parade first thing in the morning.

And finally, here are some trend predictions for 1997, courtesy of marketing consultancy New Solutions.

- The trend for all things "clear", "lite" and "pure" will make way for a boom in all things red, even red beers.
- Madonna's new film *Evita* will lead to an outbreak of South American themes, including food and dance crazes.
- Supermarket home deliveries will go national.
- The advent of the recordable CD.

You have been warned.

Nigel Cope

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	166.25	8.4	36.33	1000	24.23	76.73	0.840
Canada	2.2722	54.49	84.55	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Germany	2.3536	59.49	89.55	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
France	5.7828	57.83	87.89	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Italy	2.2500	31.45	61.51	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Spain	163.88	85.71	115.77	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Japan	134.78	21.18	51.24	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
UK	53.66	5.10	15.16	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Belgium	33.22	3.22	13.28	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Denmark	21.92	2.19	7.25	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Norway	10.056	1.01	3.07	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Sweden	11.402	1.14	3.20	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Australia	2.2554	22.54	52.60	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
South Africa	2.2554	22.54	52.60	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840
Singapore	2.2554	22.54	52.60	1368	24.23	76.73	0.840

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar	Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	166.25	0.898	Nigeria	12.575	7.8000
Austria	13.222	0.898	Philippines	43.772	21.3200
Brazil	1.7127	10.383	Portugal	20.108	27.445
China	1.7127	8.275	Russia	6.053	34.40
Czech	5.6535	2.010	South Africa	2.2554	22.54
Denmark	2.2554	22.54	Spain	163.88	85.71
France	5.7828	57.83	Sweden	11.402	1.14
Germany	2.3536	59.49	Switzerland	2.2554	22.54
Italy	2.2500	31.45	UK	53.66	5.10
Japan	134.78	21.18	US	166.25	8.4
UK	53.66	5.10			

## Interest Rates

UK	600%	Germany	250%	US	875%	Japan	050%
Base Rate	5.00%	Discount	4.50%	Federal Funds	5.25%	Discount	2.50%
Intervention	3.50%	Canada	4.75%	Repo	5.00%	Central Bank	3.00%
Discount	7.50%	Denmark	5.00%	3-Month Repo	6.25%	Switzerland	1.00%
Advances	2.50%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Avg)	4.00%	London	4.25%

## Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	7.1%	7.7%	Netherlands	6.4%	6.7%
US	5.9%	6.5%	Spain	6.0%	6.3%
Germany	5.1%	5.7%	Sweden	6.8%	7.1%
France	5.5%	6.2%	Belgium	5.4%	5.7%
			Italy	5.8%	6.1%
			ECU	6.4%	6.7%

## Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Banking	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Local Authority	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Discount Market	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Thrifts (10 Day)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
ECU (10 Day)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
ECU (10 Day)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%

## Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia	2.2554	France	5.7828
Canada	2.2722	Germany	2.3536
Denmark	2.2554	Italy	2.2500
Japan	134.78	Netherlands	6.4%
UK	53.66	Spain	6.0%
US	166.25	Sweden	6.8%

## Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Short Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Long Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Short Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27

## Life FTSE Index Option

Series	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Dec	3890	3890	3890
Jan	3890	3890	3890
Feb	3890	3890	3890
Mar	3890	3890	3890

## Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Short Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Long Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27
Short Gt	100.27	100.27	100.27

## Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Dec	3890	3890	3890
Jan	3890	3890	3890
Feb	3890	3890	3890
Mar	3890	3890	3890

## Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price
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## sport

# Found wanting for a touch of fortune

Phil Shaw looks at Frank Clark's forlorn attempt to live with the legacy of Brian Clough as Nottingham Forest's manager

Barely a month has passed since Frank Clark was telling people that Nottingham Forest needed a few wins before the takeover of the club was completed. Otherwise, he added with a wry smile, someone else would be spending the money put up by the successful consortium.

Clark's resignation, after he apparently failed to secure assurances about his future as manager, demonstrates once again that many a true word is spoken in jest. Yet although he leaves Forest propping up the Premiership and without a win since the season's opening day, any rounded assessment of his three and a half year tenure at the City Ground should not judge him too harshly.

For it was Clark who, while hardly the people's choice to succeed Brian Clough, immediately restored Forest to the top flight. More than that, he led them to third place in the Premiership the next season. Then, after other English clubs had fallen by the wayside, they reached the last eight of the UEFA Cup less than a year ago.

Strange as it may seem in the light of yesterday's developments, Clark was being seriously considered at that time by the Football Association as a successor to Terry Venables as manager of England. Stuart Pearce publicly announced that Clark ought to stay at Forest for

the rest of his career. The board, ironically, reacted by pledging to keep him well into the next century.

They had surprised many people, not least Clark, by plucking him from his pin-striped desk job as managing director of Leyton Orient. The too-good-to-go-down Forest team had just been relegated. Clough had retired, and two of their prime assets, Roy Keane

**Frank Clark fact-file**  
 9 May 1948: Born in Lough, Co. Dublin.  
 1968: First Cup winner with Newcastle.  
 May 1970: Joined Forest after 200 League appearances for Newcastle.  
 1978: League Championship medal.  
 1979: European Cup winners' medal.  
 July 1979: Standardised assistant manager.  
 August 1982: Forest assistant manager.  
 October 1983: Overst assistant manager.  
 May 1985: Orient manager.  
 1986: Promotion to old Third Division.  
 1988: Manager of Nottingham Forest after Brian Clough's resignation.  
 1989: Forest return to Premiership.  
 1990: Fifth place and set Premier League record of 25 unbeaten matches.  
 18 Dec 1996: Resigns as manager.

and Nigel Clough, were intent on leaving.

Clark used the revenue from their transfers to fund the signings of a raw young striker from Southampton and an unsung centre-back from Millwall, Stan Collymore and Colin Cooper, not only helped Forest back up but went on to represent England alongside Pearce, whom the new incumbent had persuaded to stick with the club.

Two other transactions, bringing David Phillips and Lars Bohinen to the East Midlands, seemed to confirm Clark as a shrewd manipulator of the market. The impression was cemented by the initial success of Bryan Roy but, like the Dutchman's impact, Clark's touch deserted him.

As the Nottingham Evening Post put it in an unsigned editorial yesterday: "If a manager lives and dies by his results and by his dealings in the transfer market, then Frank Clark's departure from the City Ground is overdue... A manager can only be allowed so many mistakes when it comes to buying and selling. His decision to resign might be viewed as the right one."

Clark's predecessor used to mock his own knack of buying strikers who could not score. As Peter Ward, Justin Fashanu and Ian Wallace went to the Clough era, so Roy, Andrea Silenzi, Kevin Campbell and Dean Saunders came to symbolise Clark's increasingly patchy record.

The Post pointed out that, in financial terms, Campbell's 11 goals had so far cost Forest £227,000 each; Silenzi's two set them back £900,000 apiece; and Saunders' two a mere £750,000 each. The Croatian defender Nikola Jerkan has also failed to make an impact, prompting the paper to call Clark's judgment "remarkably flawed."



End game: Frank Clark directs Forest's play for what proved to be the last time in Tuesday's defeat at Liverpool

Photograph: Phil Cole/Alisport

With hindsight, however, the key moment in Clark's reign was the sale of Collymore to Liverpool. The player felt he had outgrown the club and was not popular in the dressing-room. Yet, without his goals, Forest could not operate their counter-attacking system to the same effect. Even their limited success in Europe was achieved largely

through backs-to-the-wall defence. Clark's cause was not helped, either, by a serious injury to Steve Stone, another who progressed to international status under his wing, or by Pearce's evident staleness after the exertions of Euro 96. Like Jason Lee's ridiculed hairstyle, Forest's fortunes went pineapple shaped. From being

the team who established the Premiership's longest unbeaten run (25 games), they now hold the record for matches without a win (16). To his credit, Clark never used the impasse over the buy-out of Forest as an excuse for their failings on the pitch, though it clearly tied his hands in terms of bringing in fresh

faces and had an unsettling effect on confidence. In what proved to be his final match, Tuesday's 4-2 defeat at Liverpool, Collymore twisted the knife by scoring twice. Afterward, Clark likened his own and the club's situation to being in limbo.

Perhaps, though, they are merely fulfilling their role in the

scheme of things prior to Clough's unprecedented and unrepeatable success: that of the modestly resourced provincial club destined to fit between the top two divisions. Unless the new owners are extremely judicious, or lucky in their choice of successor, Clark's sojourn at Forest may come to be seen as the last of the good times.

## £250,000 award for foul that ruined career

The former Stockport player Brian McCord was yesterday awarded an estimated £250,000 damages by a High Court judge for a tackle which broke his leg and ended his career.

It is the first time a judge has awarded compensation to a professional player for injuries received during a game – a move which is likely to cause a major impact on all sport.

Mr Justice Ian Kennedy found that the then Swansea City captain, John Cornforth, had made an error when he challenged McCord for the ball during Swansea's game against Stockport in March, 1993.

The "horrible injuries" to McCord's right leg ruled him out of the club and he is now study-

ing to become a physiotherapist. "I am delighted with the judgment," McCord said. "I have been on income support since the accident and I was 100 per cent sure taking this action was the right thing to do."

McCord's solicitor, John England, said the judgment was a landmark because there was no system for players to obtain compensation for injuries received during games. He said: "It is a very important judgment which will have great ramifications throughout all professional sports. I believe it is time for the sporting bodies to devise some system of compensation without redress to the courts."

The judge said much had been made of the severity of the

injury but it did not help decide whether there had been negligence. He said he had adopted the stance that an "ordinary, reasonable" spectator would take as to whether the tackle was negligent or reckless – or whether there had been an error of judgment or lapse of skill.

Walter Williams, a South Wales policeman who was the match assessor producing a report on the abilities of the linesmen and referee, told the judge in his view the tackle was among the worst three he had ever seen. He said Cornforth's right foot was two feet above the ball.

Bobby Gould, the Wales manager who was in the director's box with Williams, said in his opinion Cornforth intended to strike the player not the ball. "It was one of the worst tackles I have ever seen," Gould said.

The judge said he had listened to the evidence of Gould and Williams, and to the evidence of Cornforth that the tackle did carry a risk of serious injury if there was any misjudgment of the timing.

He said he could understand the many witnesses who said Cornforth was playing the man and not the ball but "that was not my conclusion," particularly having heard about his good reputation. However, the judge ruled that the tackle was "inconsistent" with taking reasonable care and it was one occasion when his skill "deserted him".

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## BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS Rugby league's transformation has inspired many volumes. Dave Hadfield casts his eye over them

## Read all about it: the really stupid game

No doubt about the publishing event of the year in Wigan. At the shop there that shifts more rugby league literature than any other in the country, the definitive account of the local club's unforgettable last 15 years is outselling even *Soul Survivors: The Wigan Casino Story: The Best Years of Our Lives* (Mainstream, £15.99) was a story aching to be told and Paul Wilson, who chronicled it for papers in the town before graduating to this one, was ideally placed to tell it. He does so with great style and insight, so much so that it stands out as the only comparable feat. Larry Writer's magnificent *Never Before, Never Again* about the equally dominant St George side of the 50s and 60s.

If Wigan have been the great running story of the last decade and a half, then the theme of the last year and a half has been Super League. Two books tell another compelling tale from radically different perspectives. Simon Kellner's *To Jerusalem and Back* (Macmillan, £14.99) is a heart-felt testament from a league traditionalist which is at its best reflecting on the past rather than reading the runes of the future.

For the blow-by-blow account of how it all happened, read Mike Colman's *Super League: The Inside Story* (Ironbark, £14.99). This is a remarkably even-handed recounting of a tangled tale, especially considering that the author is a News Ltd journalist. It was written at half-time in the legal battle, with the Australian Rugby League still ahead on the scoreboard, so an updated edition is being prepared. In the meantime, this one is quite revealing enough.

The Rugby League's one-time archivist, Robert Gate, is another with strong views on events over the last couple of years. His foreword to *The Struggle for the Ashes II* (R.E. Gate, £12.99) is a battle cry for all those who believe that the game and the best of its heritage have been sold down the river. The book itself is an update of his admirable 1984 tome, completely re-illustrated and thoroughly timely in view of the continuing dislocation of the tradition of Ashes series.

Super League also rears its head in my own latest foray into editing and writing, *XIII Worlds* (Mainstream, £14.99), but so does much else. This is less a factual account of rugby league's fortunes around the globe than a snuff at the atmosphere of the game in its various settings. I believe - but then I would - that it is worth buying for Harry Edgar's musings on his beloved France alone. Hard core Francophiles might also try to track down Jacques of all-trades Louis Bonny's *Le Rugby à XIII* (Cano & Franck, 200F, about £30). It is expensive at current exchange rates, although not much more than a round of drinks in the environs of the Charley Stadium, and it is, not surprisingly, in French, but it is a veritable treasure-trove.

One of the heartening features of the publishing scene over the last few years has been the vigorous activity of London League Publications. *The Sin Bin* (LLP, £5.95) is amusing enough to qualify as that hardy annual, the ideal stocking-filler. Their guide to the grounds, the splendidly titled *I Wouldn't Start from Here* (LLP, £5) is also well worth having, although the London Broncos' move from The Valley has already rendered that section out of date.

The mighty Australian magazine, *Rugby League Week*, celebrated its quarter century last year and *Rugby League Week: 25 Sensational Years* (Harper Sports, £16.50) is probably the best means of recalling how events during that period looked at the time.

Also from Australia, *League of a Nation* (ABC, £13.50) is a stimulating collection of writings on the game, often from surprising viewpoints. Take this for an opening paragraph, for instance: "Football [by which the writer, Sydney-style, means rugby league] is stupid. It's really, really stupid. It's utterly stupid. How can I be so sure? Because that's exactly why the people who go to watch football like it. If it was any less stupid they wouldn't watch it." Discuss.

## Faldo opts for military precision

Golf  
ANDY FARRELL

There is not much doubt what is the focus of Nick Faldo's attention for next year. And in doing everything he can to realise that ambition, he is even making sure his eyes see it the same way.

Asked for his highlight of 1996, the US Masters champion said: "Obviously, winning the US Open." He postscripted his correction with: "That's given the game away."

Faldo has already won three Open championships to go with his three US Masters green jackets and has made no secret of his desire to add the next most prestigious crown. He will have played next year's US Open venue, Congressional, near Washington, several times before teeing up on 12 June.

The 1997 season for Faldo started last week at his Florida base at Lake Nona. An intensive week on the practice range with his coach, David Leadbetter, was matched with an equally strenuous work-out regime in the gym. He has also seen an eye doctor who helps army SWAT personnel.

"Combat golfer, that's me," Faldo said. "Your eyes can be out of alignment but you can do exercises to line them up. It's mainly for putting and it could explain why I was regularly missing putts short."

Despite an important birthday landmark next summer,

Faldo has not lost any of his hunger for success. "I pushed hard at 30 for the Open and at 40 I'm still pushing hard for the US Open. I'm not going to sit back. I would hate to think that I could have tried harder."

"That's why I'm brutalising myself in the gym. I'm really working hard and enjoying it. I don't want to get bigger, it's all flexibility."

After Christmas at home, Faldo starts his season in California before journeying to Australia for the Johnny Walker Classic at the end of January. Then it is the US Tour all the way until after the US Open.

Discovering Open champions of the future is what the Nick Faldo Junior Series will be hoping to do. Promising amateurs of 17 years of age and under from Great Britain and Ireland will play in five regional order of merits to qualify for a grand final at the Forest of Arden.

Faldo, who is initially underwriting the venture with £100,000, said: "Sometimes I wish I could turn back the clock and set out on a professional career with all the knowledge I have accumulated in 20 years on tour. The next best thing is to pass on all that information to the next generation."

"Starting something like this can only be a benefit. Sport is being recognised more as a career. When I told my careers adviser that I wanted to be a golfer, he said only one in 10 thousand make it. I said: 'Okay, I'll be that one'."

## Record for Hickman

Swimming

James Hickman broke his own British short course record on the opening day of the Winter Championships in Sheffield yesterday. The 20-year-old, who reached the final of the 200m in Atlanta, took 0.26sec off his 100m mark in the 25-metre pool, clocking 53.30 in his heat to better the time he set in Gelsenkirchen in February.

Karen Pickering celebrated her 25th birthday by reaching

the 200m freestyle final with the fastest time. The Ipswich swimmer, troubled by a back injury sustained in a recent car accident, clocked 2min 00.99sec.

Susan Rolph, a double gold medalist at last week's European Short-course Championships in Germany, will not be fined for her withdrawal even though she will compete for her French club, Clichy, on Sunday. The Amateur Swimming Association has effectively granted Rolph dispensation because of the death of her grandmother.



Nigel Coupe, on Europe K, rides high in the Christmas Cracker Accumulator event at Olympia yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Whitaker enjoying purple patch

Equestrianism  
GENEVIÈVE MURPHY  
reports from Olympia

John Whitaker gave the Virtual Village team their third win of the Olympia Show Jumping Championships yesterday afternoon, when he rode Welham to win the P & O Events Christmas Cracker Accumulator by a comfortable margin of almost five seconds. He defeated the Essex rider, John Renwick, on Roundstreet Charlie.

Whitaker had won here on Wednesday night with Granusch, a few hours after Nick Skelton (also one of the purple-jacketed V.V. team) scored

on Quick Star. They are part of a sponsorship deal (which also includes Michael Whitaker and Geoff Billington) that is worth more than £1m to the four riders.

James Fisher was another contestant to gain a clear-cut victory yesterday when he rode eight-year-old Revival to win the Beeton-Rumford Christmas Pudding Stakes, defeating William Funnell on Comex by 2.6sec.

Fisher bought Revival in the Netherlands four years ago and the bay gelding, who has won about 20 contests this year, has so far done everything that has been asked of him. "He's naturally quick over a fence so you can expect to do a good time

with him, but I still didn't realise he was that much quicker than Comex," Fisher said.

The mare Bowriver Queen, who won the closing Grand Prix at the Horse of the Year Show in October, will be Fisher's mount in tomorrow's Volvo World Cup qualifier.

John Whitaker on Welham and Nick Skelton on Dollar Girl (both with their new Virtual Village prefixes) are bound to start at shorter prices on the Tote.

Olympia, celebrating its 25th anniversary, has a total of 19 sponsors and the show (by far the best of the British indoor fixtures) goes from strength to strength. By contrast Hickstead, where the major outdoor shows

are held, has suffered a major setback with the news that Silk Cut will no longer be sponsoring the Derby meeting.

This year BBC television transmitted six hours and 20 minutes of the action from Hickstead, with the Silk Cut Derby as its principal attraction. It is hoped that lottery money or a new sponsor will plug the gap left by the departing company, whose contribution included £135,000 in prize-money for the Derby alone.

Joanna Jackson, winner of three gold medals at this year's Paralympic Games, received the British Equestrian Writers' Trophy having been voted equestrian personality of the year. She

was a member of the victorious British equestrian team in Atlanta as well as winning the two individual contests in her grade.

Jackson, a single arm amputee, is helping to run the village post office at Cullompton in Devon for her mother and grandfather, who are both ill. But she took a day off yesterday to come to Olympia and receive her award.

Olympia show jumping championships: P & O Events Christmas Cracker Accumulator 1. Nigel Coupe (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 2. John Renwick (Charlie) R. Charlie, 68.40; 3. John Whitaker (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 4. William Funnell (Comex) U. Comex, 68.40; 5. Nick Skelton (Dollar Girl) U. Dollar Girl, 68.40; 6. James Fisher (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 7. John Whitaker (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 8. Nick Skelton (Dollar Girl) U. Dollar Girl, 68.40; 9. James Fisher (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 10. John Whitaker (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 11. Nick Skelton (Dollar Girl) U. Dollar Girl, 68.40; 12. James Fisher (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 13. John Whitaker (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 14. Nick Skelton (Dollar Girl) U. Dollar Girl, 68.40; 15. James Fisher (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 16. John Whitaker (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 17. Nick Skelton (Dollar Girl) U. Dollar Girl, 68.40; 18. James Fisher (Revival) U. Revival, 68.40; 19. John Whitaker (Welham) U. Welham, 68.40; 20. 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**Whitaker's purple patch**  
Genevieve Murphy reports on show jumping's festive event, page 27

**Sport**

**Living with a legacy**  
Phil Shaw looks at Frank Clark's attempt to follow Clough, page 26

# Pearce poised to take Forest job

**United offered Batistuta for £13m**

**Football**  
CLIVE WHITE

Stuart Pearce, the former England captain, was last night offered the thankless task of trying to rescue Nottingham Forest from their perilous position at the foot of the Premiership table. Following the resignation of Frank Clark late the previous evening, the 34-year-old Forest skipper has been given 24 hours to decide whether he will accept the role of caretaker manager. No one expects him to refuse.

Clark himself backed the board's decision to offer the job to Pearce, who has often expressed a desire to go into management when his playing days are over. Irving Korn, the chairman, said that Clark's assistant, Alan Hill, would assume administrative duties. "It's a wise decision by the board and I'm certain the players will get a lift from it," Clark said. "If he decides to accept I'm sure he'll get things going. I can't believe any Nottingham Forest fans will be disappointed by the decision."

They may, however, have

mixed feelings about Clark's decision to go. The success he brought to the club, upon succeeding Brian Clough as manager three and a half years ago – itself an unenviable task – was beyond the wildest dreams of most rational Forest supporters but it has dissolved this season against a background of imprudent spending by Clark and a takeover battle which has rumbled on and on, leaving him financially hamstrung.

Much of Clark's troubles stemmed from the sale of Stan Collymore to Liverpool for £3.5m in the summer of last year

– a transfer which he did his best to resist – and it was ironic that that player's brace of goals in the 4-2 defeat of Forest at Anfield on Tuesday should precipitate Clark's resignation, which was reluctantly accepted at an emergency board meeting on Wednesday night. It left the club three points adrift at the bottom of the table without a league win since the opening day of the season 16 games ago – a Premier League record.

"You could say the Liverpool game was the final straw," Clark said, describing his decision to go as the lowest point in his

career. "I saw certain warning signs in that display. I didn't want to hang around until they [the players] lost faith in me. That would have been a disaster for the club."

His decision echoed the sentiments of Ray Harford, who recently chose to quit as manager of Blackburn Rovers for the good of the club, since when the Lancastrians' fortunes have revived – to Forest's cost.

"I'd just about run out of things to do, so I've done the ultimate," Clark said. "I'm resigning in the hope that it will give the team a short-term lift."

I didn't want to hang on until they [the new owners] came in. There could have been another five or six games played by then and it might have been too late. It's vital now that the team gets a couple of wins. If they do it will transform the picture."

Both rival consortiums had offered their public support for Clark but rumours to the contrary about his position had persisted, making Clark uneasy. Only this week he said that he felt like a turkey with Christmas approaching everyone was readying themselves for a good time save for the turkey. Clark

leaves with his dignity and reputation intact and his name has already been put forward as a front-runner for the Manchester City job. He said he had received some "speculative offers" and was keen to get back into management.

As for Pearce, few young men could go into management with greater backing. A bigger crowd favourite it is hard to imagine, he is at club or international level. "If he doesn't accept we'll think again," Korn said. "But I believe that Stuart, being the type of person he is, will accept the challenge."

ALAN NIXON

Manchester United are being offered the Argentine World Cup player Gabriel Batistuta – for a little matter of £13m.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, has been sounded out by agents working for the Fiorentina forward, who headed the Serie A scoring charts last season. Batistuta wants to come to England at the end of this season, and United will monitor his progress.

The Foyenswood chairman, Jorjen van den Herik, is to contact Celtic today to discuss "the conditions" for buying Pierre van Hooijdonk. The 27-year-old Dutch striker's rift with the club has apparently reached breaking point.

Two more French players were to join Arsenal. The full-back Jerome Bonniel wants to leave the Spanish club Deportivo La Coruña to work with Arsene

Wenger, while the international midfielder Claude Makélélé is unhappy at Nantes, claiming Arsenal and Chelsea have both expressed an interest.

Southampton have suffered a major blow with news that their defender Jason Dodd must undergo a knee operation to repair a damaged cartilage. The former England Under-21 international has been suffering knee trouble for the past two months.

West Bromwich Albion are set to strengthen their injury-hit squad by signing the Nottingham County central defender Shaun Murphy for £500,000.

Bolton Wanderers yesterday completed the signing of the experienced Sheffield Wednesday midfielder player, John Sheridan. They have agreed to pay £180,000 for the Republic of Ireland international and Wednesday will receive a further £25,000 if Bolton are promoted.

Juninho is doubtful for Wednesday's match at Blackburn tomorrow. The Brazilian has not fully recovered from an ankle injury he received at Aston Villa three weeks ago. Emerson will definitely play after coming through a reserve game.

Newcastle's new home on the moor, page 6

**FIRST TEST: Atherton falls early as his tourists make a damp start to their pursuit of Zimbabwe's imposing total**

## England ground down by Flower

**Cricket**

DEREK PRINGLE  
reports from Bulawayo  
Zimbabwe 376  
England 48-1

One of the features of this tour has been the coach David Lloyd's remorseless search for the positive aspects of England's play. As this has so far centred on the sub-atomic, a session here, an over there, England's coach would have needed something akin to an electron microscope to find anything good about yesterday's rain-shortened day, especially after Andy Flower's century has made Zimbabwe's position in this first Test a virtually impregnable one.

It was a resolute performance from the elder Flower, who with the help of a useful tail, took Zimbabwe's total to 376. A score that brought differing responses from the rival camps, with Lloyd feeling it was "A bonus and manageable on a smashing batting pitch," while Flower felt it to be "A respectable enough total to put England under pressure, with the leggie [Paul Strang] beginning to do things as the rough on the pitch spreads."

On such a slow playing surface, however, neither view can be totally discounted, although England's is by far the more optimistic considering their recent batting form and the fact that they will have to bat last on a pitch already taking spin, albeit slowly.

Once again there appeared little in it for the seamers, and not a great deal more for England's two spinners, as Zimbabwe unhurriedly added to their overnight score. What turn there was, came from bowler's footholes and Flower spent a gritty 59 minutes in the nineties, as Phil Tufnell probed and sifted the rough outside

the left-hander's off-stump. Flower's vigilance eventually ended soon after lunch after he reverse swept the Middlesex spinner for three to bring up his hundred: a daring wristy shot made almost regulation by the squash and hockey upspringing that is the norm for most white Zimbabweans.

It was the 28-year-old Flower's third Test century, and one he claimed gave him an extra frisson, coming as it did against England, where he spent last summer coaching at Epsom College and playing for Eastbourne in the Sussex League. Unless a call to county cricket intervenes, he will be taking up summer residency in the Parks and the challenge of coaching Oxford University. That establishment is not renowned for its tolerance of modern vulgarities such as the reverse sweep.

Mind you the way England – Robert Croft excepted – have bowled generally, it was difficult to find a batsman under stress in any position, and for the most part, Zimbabwe's tail-enders looked as untroubled as Flower. As in the first two sessions on Wednesday, England were far too short, particularly to Paul Strang, who gave an Alan Knott-like exhibition of upper cuts over the slips, as he and Flower added 79 for the seventh wicket.

Strang, who has a Test century against Pakistan to his name, also played some fine aggressive shots off the spinners and Croft, who opened the day's proceedings with Darren Gough, was twice whacked for four as he strayed from Wednesday's impeccable length.

It was hereabouts that England looked totally bereft of ideas and only a smart catch by Phil Tufnell over his head, brought Strang's cameo to an end as he chipped a slower full-toss from Chris Silverwood to mid-on.

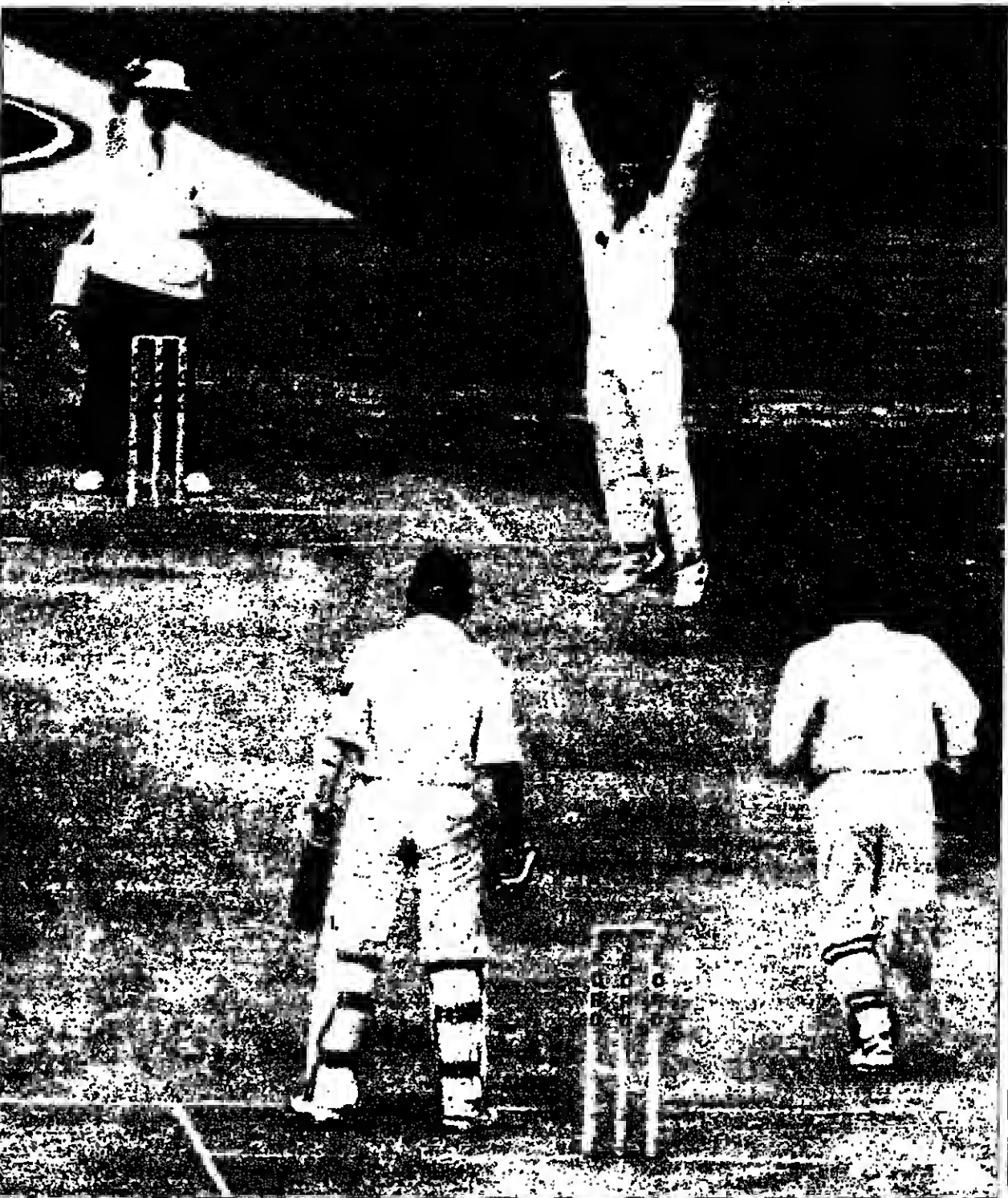
With charcoal shaded thunderclouds building dramatically, Heath Streak played-on to Mullaney, while Tufnell, at last settling into a rhythm, accounted for Flower, who, in attempting a deft sweep to leg, gloved the ball up high enough for Alec Stewart to complete a fine diving catch. Nick Knight, similarly smartly pounced Henry Olonga at silly point a few balls later.

As the air filled with the distinctive smell of rain peculiar to the drier parts of Africa, England began their innings in fading light, a handicap made up for by the absence of Eddo Brandes, Zimbabwe's mercurial swing bowler, who had gone over on his ankle the day before the Test.

While seam prevailed, England suffered few alarms but when the home side brought on a second Strang, Paul, for the first, the seamer Bryan, he immediately got his wrist-spinners to grip. With the home side desperate for a wicket before the rain set in, Strang – normally a looping leg-spinner – pushed one through to catch Atherton back on his crease, unable to get bat to ball.

It was not the perhaps the most indisputable of blows but it gave the home side the flip they had wanted just a ball before tea. As Atherton trudged off to the sole applause of a huge thunderclap, rain began to fall as both play and England's repertoire were suspended for the rest of the day.

England and Pakistan have added their support to the idea of a world championship of Test cricket, a blueprint for which was unveiled by Matthew Engel, the editor of *Wisden*, in October and drew immediate praise from Ali Bacher, the managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa.



Michael Atherton, the tourists' captain, falls leg-before to the leg-spinner Paul Strang before rain halted England's first innings yesterday. Photograph: Allsport

## Zimbabwe's fears over bowling are unfounded

HENRY BLOFELD

England's awful bowling on the first morning meant that it was always going to be a struggle for them to get back into this match, but at least it was a performance the bowlers had got out of their system.

But, far from it, for their bowling on the second morning was every bit as bad and had ensured that England are going to have an enormous fight to save this first Test match against Zimbabwe.

At the team meeting the night before the match, one gathers that the Zimbabwean batting was minutely examined. Strengths and weaknesses were identified and a plan of campaign was devised for each of the opposing batsmen. The bowlers were left in no doubt as to what they should do.

Yet, in the event, they were, until Robert Croft began to bowl so well on the first afternoon, all of them unable to produce. After the first day's play

or before the start of the second they will surely have had another meeting to plot the course of events when Zimbabwe continued their innings.

As it was, the bowling was at least as bad as it had been on the first morning. Darren Gough was all over the place and not that fast either. One ball was short and wide and square cut, then followed a half-volley which was driven and after that came a couple the batsman had no need to play a stroke at.

Alan Mullally was dreadful. In his first four overs the batsmen only had to play nine balls out of the 24. Chris Silverwood's line was better but he never looked like getting the ball past the bat and the Zimbabweans who had gone into the match a trifle apprehensive at what England's faster bowlers might do to them, could scarcely believe their luck.

It was the most depressing performance which led one to the inescapable conclusion that the seam bowlers are simply not up to it.

This time England were not saved by spin. Croft, who was driven and pulled for fours in the second over of the day, did not bowl as well as he had done on Wednesday. At the other end, Phil Tufnell did not, to start with, pitch the ball up enough. He should have been trying to bring the batsmen on to the front foot to drive.

The last ball of the day before rain brought things to a halt was another sad reflection. The Zimbabwean leg spinner, Paul Strang, was always going to be the danger man for England and Mike Atherton, of all people, made a bad mistake.

He played back and not forward to a leg spinner who was pushing the ball through and howling to a full length and he was trapped leg-before. One had hoped that India's Anil Kumble had taught that lesson to England's batsmen.

Atherton's dismissal was a serious psychological blow and it looks increasingly as if the result of this match lies in Strang's spinning fingers.

### Bulawayo scoreboard

Second day: Zimbabwe won toss		England – First innings	
Zimbabwe – First innings		N.V. Wright not out	
(Duminy 285 for 8)		157 min, 43 balls, 4 fours	
1st Innings: 376 (40 overs)		1st Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)	
A Flower 331, 122 (122)		Extras (163)	
P A Strang 3, 1 (108 min, 69 balls, 7 fours)		Total (for 1, 57 min, 13.5 overs)	
H H Streak 19 (170 min, 40 balls, 2 fours)		1st Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)	
C C Strang not out (45 min, 2 balls, 1 four)		2nd Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)	
H K Olonga 4 (12 min, 4 balls)		Extras (163)	
Extras (163)		Total (for 1, 57 min, 13.5 overs)	
Total (for 1, 57 min, 13.5 overs)		1st Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)	
1st Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)		2nd Innings: 16 (57 min, 43 balls, 2 fours)	
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